BING

Winter
2014

No. 168

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

OUR MISSION: To perpetuate the memory and the musical legacy of Bing Crosby for the benefit of future generations

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BING magazine: www.bingmagazine.co.uk
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Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 2015 are:

USA and Canada	US $25 per annum
UK	£15 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£16 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$40 per annum
Rest of World	£18 per annum

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(b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

BING is the official journal of *The International Club Crosby* and is published in the spring, summer and winter of each year.

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EDITORIAL

Fondest Holiday greetings to all of my fellow ICC team members. And by team, I don't just mean the names that appear on the inside cover of this magazine, but ALL members of the ICC, both seasoned veterans and newcomers. We all share an interest, more than just in passing, to one of the greatest entertainers of the 20th century. All of us, in our own way, are carrying the flag and waving it proudly for future generations to ensure that Bing's vast repertoire and accomplishments will forever be known and never forgotten. To use the current Twitter hashtag vernacular, we are all members of #TeamBing.

Consider this; Bing's long association with the Christmas season, which began in widespread fashion with his 1935 recordings of "Silent Night" and "Adeste Fideles", reached its zenith in 1942 when his initial commercial recording of "White Christmas" was released by Decca Records.

Thirty-five years later, in 1977, he still was performing the song, and it was then, as it was in 1942, forever associated with him. His signature song. Fast forward to 2015, which is looming on the horizon as you read this. It's now been thirty-eight years since Bing the man physically left us, a longer span of time than when he was actually alive performing the song. Yet the song still is forever linked, forever synonymous with Bing Crosby. And still a beloved part of the Christmas season. Quite an amazing facet to his legacy, I'd say.

For those who've been lamenting the fact that we've had a few lean years as far as new Bing Crosby product is concerned, I am very happy to report the drought is over and we are literally flooded with many new, mouth-watering CD's, DVD's, and Blu-ray's. Details of all of these exciting new releases will be covered in depth later in this issue. For now, I will step aside and hand Malcolm the baton to lead you through the beautiful symphony of journalistic gems awaiting you within the forthcoming pages.

Greg Van Beek **tvanbeek@execpc.com**

The *Colossal Crosby Celebration,* as it was called when the announcement of all the forthcoming new material was made in September, was very welcome indeed after a long period of little activity. Richard Baker anticipates it all in *Keeping Track* having had to summit his article before he could actually listen to the new CDs. Please support these issues because if we don't, we could well see new releases drying up in the future.

Long-serving members will remember John Marshall who has done so much for Bing over the years and it is a pleasure to welcome him back to our pages after a long absence. Brian Willey has penned another article for us and we are delighted to have a contribution from Professor Anton Garcia-Fernandez. We have news of Mark Scrimger, another whose contribution to Crosbyana has been immense, and Bob Halls has again given us his detailed report on the Leeds meeting. Greg Van Beek has uncovered more information about the *Christmas Sing with Bing* series and Keith Parkinson looks at the Crosby-related career of our new honorary member Mary Carlisle. Ken Crossland considers some important anniversaries and Gord Atkinson talks about Bing's most famous song. Bing has popped up all over the place in the last few months and we have tried to capture this in *Bing on the Box*.

In our last issue, John Newton told us about the rare Kraft Music Hall material he had purchased and he has kindly released this to be put on a CD by JSP Records. The ICC intends to purchase a supply of 250 copies of the CD for issue to members at advantageous prices and we hope that members will strongly support this. Full details in the next issue.

Season's greetings to you all!

Malcolm Macfarlane **macwilmslo@aol.com**

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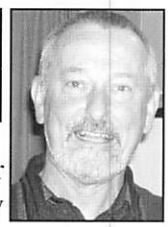
SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT



Leeds 2014 (our 49th annual /dinner meeting) was a great success with very interesting contributions from our three guest speakers supplementing Malcolm's excellent programme.

Bob Halls covers the event in more detail, but here, I would like to thank Malcolm, Perry Huntoon, Ken Barnes and Bob Phillips for their fascinating look at different aspects of Bing's illustrious career.

Recently I had the pleasure of travelling to the Isle of Wight to meet Paulette Gaylor (the daughter of our late and much respected member Leslie Gaylor). Paulette had decided to pass on Leslie's collection and I had expressed an interest in his 78's which Paulette kindly gifted to me. I also brought back a few interesting items which were sold at Leeds in memory of Leslie and the £200 raised helped with offsetting our annual meeting costs. Member Jim Reilly joined me for the day and we had a fascinating time sorting through Leslie's memorabilia. We are very grateful to Paulette for her generosity and support for the club.

BING CROSBY ON CD

Bing Crosby Enterprises have announced some excellent new releases for the winter season and I urge all members to be very supportive of their expanding catalogue. The CDs showcase some of Bing's well known LPs but there is plenty of additional unissued radio material which will undoubtedly be excellent quality and perhaps some of the tracks will be unknown to many members.

This is my usual reminder that the following attractive CDs remain available from me with the price for the UK being £7.50, Europe £8.50 and the rest of the world £9.50. Members in the US & Canada should obtain their copies from Wig Wiggins and in Australia/New Zealand from David Currington.

BING CROSBY – THROUGH THE YEARS – Vols. 2 to 10

BING CROSBY in the Hall – Rare Live Recordings from KMH 1937 – 1946

BING CROSBY and the Kraft Music Hall – Rare Original Survivors

BING CROSBY sings for the ARMED FORCES RADIO SERVICE

THE ROAD TO HONG KONG – SAY ONE FOR ME

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members with a wish that their association with the club will bring them much interest and enjoyment.

UNITED STATES

Gregg Hammond (Arlington, Texas), Don Casali (Framingham, Massachusetts), Jonathan Reichman (Chappaqua, New York), Patrick More (Vernon, Texas).

DONATIONS

The ICC is very fortunate to have generous benefactors who consistently support the club with their financial contributions and we are pleased to acknowledge gifts from:-

UNITED KINGDOM & EUROPE

George O'Reilly, Jeremy Rose, Bob Halls, Ken Shaw and the many Leeds attendees who gave generously at the meeting.

To all who give additional and generous gifts to the ICC we extend our sincere thanks.

DEATHS

Those of you who went to the Crosby Centenary celebrations at Gonzaga in 2003 will remember **Eileen Bell-Garrison**, the Dean of Library Services. Sadly Eileen passed away on October 15, 2014, after her third

battle with cancer at the relatively young age of 61. After earning a bachelors and two masters' degrees, she began working at Gonzaga University in 1981 and her 33-year-long career culminated in her appointment as Dean of Library Services. Eileen was the one who lobbied the Gonzaga president to allow the birthday celebration for Bing. She went to the Hofstra event in 2002 to see how they promoted Bing, as she believed that Gonzaga should do more to honor him other than a statue that didn't depict him as an entertainer at all. Eileen also went to New York for the Crosby film festival at Lincoln Center to see how they did it, as she and her colleague Stephanie Plowman were starting to work with what became the Bing Crosby Theater in Spokane. She was also invited to the Walnut Creek restaurant opening, and she and her husband stayed at the Crosby home at Hillsborough.

Sadly, we have also learned of the death of **Johnny Jones**, our long-time member from Ballyhalbert, Northern Ireland. I recall with affection his tape messages, especially in the early days of the Bing meetings, when he would send his greetings from a troubled Northern Ireland.

We extend our sincere condolences to the relatives and friends of Eileen and Johnny.

LEEDS 2015 (50th meeting) - Sunday October 4th
This will be the final official Club tribute to Bing in Leeds and members' last opportunity to be present at what hopefully will be a great celebration. I urge all to note the date and please come along and share the fun with fellow enthusiasts and kindred spirits.

My warmest seasonal greetings to all members.

Michael Crampton **mdcrampton@gmail.com**

Bing Crosby's kids recall dad's duet with Bowie

We were pleased to read this news story put out by the Associated Press on July 23.

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — David Bowie's duet with Bing Crosby on the entertainer's 1977 Christmas television special left an indelible impression on Crosby's teenage children.

Harry, Mary and Nathaniel Crosby were on set when Bowie arrived to tape his appearance. The mash-up between the cardigan-clad singer known for "White Christmas" and the glam rocker who was in his Ziggy Stardust phase required some last-minute reworking of "The Little Drummer Boy."

The result was a new melody and lyrics called "Peace on Earth." The duet remains a holiday staple and a curiosity. Bowie was 30 and Crosby was 73 at the time. Crosby died of a heart attack a month after the taping in September 1977.

Mary Crosby remembered Bowie arriving on set.

"The doors opened and David walked in with his wife. They were both wearing full-length mink coats, they had matching full makeup and their hair was bright red," she told the summer TV critics' tour Wednesday. "We were thinking, 'Oh my god.'"

Nathaniel Crosby added, "It almost didn't happen. I think the producers told him to take the lipstick off and take the earring out. It was just incredible to see the contrast."

Watching in the wings, the Crosby kids noticed a transformation.

"They sat at the piano and David was a little nervous," Mary Crosby recalled. "Dad realized David was this amazing musician, and David realized Dad was an amazing musician. You could see them both collectively relax and then magic was made."

The Crosby family in action at the PBS event

The Crosby siblings — now all in their 50s — and their 80-year-old mother, Kathryn, made a rare public appearance together Wednesday to discuss the American Masters episode, "Bing Crosby Rediscovered," which premieres in December.

(Editor: Since then, we have had further information and I hope that this issue of the magazine reaches you all in time.)

Bing Crosby Rediscovered: About the Film

The new documentary ***American Masters: Bing Crosby Rediscovered***, premiering nationwide Tuesday, December 2 at 8 p.m. on PBS (check local listings) as the series' Season 28 finale, explores the life and legend of this iconic performer, revealing a man far more complex than his public persona. The film is available December 2 on DVD from PBS Distribution. A holiday encore presentation airs Friday, December 26 at 9 p.m. on PBS (check local listings).

Crosby's estate, HLC Properties, Ltd., granted *American Masters* unprecedented access to the entertainer's personal and professional archives, including never-before-seen home movies, Dictabelt recordings, photos and more. Narrated by Stanley Tucci, the film features new interviews with all surviving members of Crosby's immediate family — wife Kathryn, daughter Mary and sons Harry and Nathaniel. The film reveals Crosby's struggles with his first wife, Dixie Lee, and their sons Gary, Dennis, Phillip and Lindsay. Mary addresses accusations of abuse first published in Gary's 1983 memoir, which tarnished their father's legacy. Gary speaks candidly about both his and his mother's alcoholism as well as his difficulties with his father in a never-before-seen 1987 interview. Other new interviews include singers Tony Bennett and Michael Feinstein, record producer Ken Barnes, biographer Gary Giddins, and writers Buz Kohan and Larry Grossman, who both share the story behind Crosby's Christmas special duet with David Bowie.

"We naturally think of Bing at Christmastime, but with more No. 1 recordings than anyone, it is easy to overlook all of his other achievements. Thankfully, this film delves deeply into all of his remarkable work, and will surprise many viewers with a unique perspective on his private life," says Michael Kantor, executive producer of *American Masters.*

Gonzaga's Crosby Collection

There was some more news for us in September.

SPOKANE, Washington – The public museum for Gonzaga University's renowned collection of Bing Crosby memorabilia has moved to the Craftsman-style Crosby House at 508 E. Sharp Ave. where the world-famous entertainer and Gonzaga's most famous alumnus grew up. The public is invited to a grand opening from 1-4 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 13 to view the Crosby exhibition in the 101-year-old house on campus.

The house, which sits on Gonzaga's northern boundary at the main entrance to campus, was designed by Bing's father and built by him and two of Bing's uncles. The family moved into the house when it was completed in 1913 and Bing lived there until he left for Hollywood in 1925. The Crosby family sold the home in 1936 to a neighbor, who lived there until 1978 when the Gonzaga Alumni Association purchased it. The University acquired the home in 2008.

The collection has been on display since 1957 in the Crosbyana Room of the former Crosby Library. Bing had organized an Emmy-winning television production to raise funds for construction of the library, which became the Crosby Student Center in 1992 when the Foley Center Library opened. With the John J. Hemmingson Center under construction and scheduled to open in fall 2015, the Crosby Student Center will be repurposed – offering the opportunity for the public exhibition to move to Bing's boyhood home.

Gonzaga polished the Crosby House in preparation to host the collection, installing lighting in its dining room and parlor, new cabinets to house the gold records and other materials, and new interior paint and wood trim. Gonzaga's office of sponsored research is located in the home's second floor and student employees will continue to serve as hosts.

"This move makes it much easier for visitors to find and gain access to the Crosby Collection," said Stephanie Plowman, special collections librarian who manages the collection, which will be open from 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. weekdays, and on Saturdays from 1-4 p.m. The exhibit is free to the public with designated free parking directly behind the house.

Bing Crosby began donating items to Gonzaga in 1957, including gold and platinum records, trophies, plaques, and photographs and more. In addition to the generous donations of materials by Bing prior to his death, Crosby fans and family began to recognize Gonzaga as the home of all things Crosby. In 1993, the University received the entire collection from the Bing Crosby Historical Society in Tacoma, Washington. Additionally, several collectors have given major donations of Crosby recordings. It's the world's largest public collection of Bing Crosby memorabilia.

Thousands of visitors – from all 50 states and at least 20 countries – flock to Gonzaga each year to view the Crosby Collection. Crosby fans recognize Spokane and Gonzaga as being his hometown and alma mater. Visitors can see approximately 200 items, including the duplicate Oscar he won in 1944 for *Going My Way.* There are 22 gold and two platinum records from such titles as "White Christmas," "Silent Night," and "Swinging on a Star."

Also displayed are movie stills and photographs, record albums, books, and sheet music. There are many trophies and awards he received over the years from various organizations. There are also items from the Crosby Research Foundation, such as the "Trip Trap," a mousetrap that the foundation invented. There is also a health device that Crosby endorsed called "Stretch to Your Health with the Stars."

What's on display in the Crosby House represents just a portion of the total Crosby Collection materials. What is not on display is housed in the University Archives and Special Collections vault in the Foley Center Library. This vault also houses the University's Rare Book Collection, the Gerard Manley Hopkins Collection and other manuscript collections.

For information, contact Stephanie Plowman (509) 313-3847 or via email at plowman@gonzaga.edu.

(Editor: There is now a Facebook page for 'Bing Crosby House' and items from the collection are frequently displayed upon it. Please take a look and "like" it.)

From the Vaults: The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad

To celebrate the release of *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad* for the first time on Blu-ray Walt Disney Studios put on a special showing of the film for their Gold and Silver Members on September 13 at the Burbank studios in California. Before the film, fans enjoyed a special presentation from Disney historian Mindy Johnson, who has worked extensively with the Bing Crosby Archive. Mindy spoke about Bing's experience narrating *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*—the only Disney work he did. Also, the audience heard from Walt Disney Archives director Becky Cline about a song that was cut from *The Wind in the Willows* which was then performed live by the Melo-D23 Choir.

Del Mar launches new "Bing Crosby Season"

The Del Mar racetrack usually has a summer season and this year for the first time they have also launched a 15-day fall meeting which they have called the "Bing Crosby Season".

The seaside track picked up a majority of the racing dates from the fall meeting at the now-closed Hollywood Park and in the process transferred over many of that track's major stakes events. The Hollywood session had an emphasis on turf racing and Del Mar is carrying that forward with nine turf stakes on its agenda.

In keeping with its fall "Bing Crosby Season" theme — a throw-back salute to its celebrity founder — Del Mar has renamed several of its stakes to honor show business stars from the past who had roots at the shore oval. Thus, for example, what was the Cat's Cradle at Hollywood Park now has become the Betty Grable; the Hollywood Prevue instead is the Bob Hope, and the Moccasin will be presented as the Desi Arnaz.

Del Mar will open its fall session with an overnight stakes for fillies and mares at a mile on the turf named the Kathryn Crosby. The track hopes to fete the late entertainment icon's widow — now 80 and living in Northern California — with a special in-person tribute that day.

The track's additional graded races are the $200,000 Native Diver on November 29; the $150,000 Jimmy Durante (formerly the Miesque) on November 29; the $150,000 Cecil B. DeMille (formerly the Generous) on November 30; the $100,000 Red Carpet Handicap (formerly the Beverly Hills Handicap) on November 22; and the $100,000 Bob Hope on November 15. All are Grade 3 presentations.

Bing's home above Thunderbird

Another of Bing's former homes made news in September when his old house on the hill above Thunderbird Country Club in Rancho Mirage, Palm Springs, California came on the market. The house is highlighted in the Thunderbird history (www.thunderbirdcc.org/Our-Club/History.aspx) and Kathryn Crosby mentions it in her book "My Life with Bing" page 25 (photo on page 34). Bing would have moved out in 1957 to his new property in Palm Desert which was used by President Kennedy in the 60s.

Candace Taylor from the *Wall Street Journal* contacted your Editor about the house and I told her all I knew and passed her on to Robert Bader at Bing Crosby Enterprises. An article duly appeared on September 25 and extracts are given below.

After being on and off the market for the past few years, the former home of late singer Bing Crosby will relist for $5 million—a 43% jump over its prior asking price.

The Rancho Mirage, Calif., house was last on the market several years ago for $3.495 million. The house was built by Mr. Crosby in the 1950s, according to owner Robert Teller, founder of a chain of ice-cream stores. The roughly 7,000-square-foot house, which sits on a nearly 1.5-acre lot in the gated Thunderbird Heights community, has five bedrooms and six bathrooms, with a pool, spa and home theater...

The one-story house, with retractable glass walls, has both mountain and Coachella Valley views. The master bedroom has a private patio and the guest wing has a separate entrance.

Mr. Crosby had a number of homes in the Palm Springs area over the years, including another one in Palm Desert where President John F. Kennedy famously visited, according to Robert Bader of Bing Crosby Enterprises. He said the Thunderbird Heights house has had a number of owners since Mr. Crosby.

Mr. Teller, who bought the house in 2005 for $2.625 million, said it has been extensively renovated. When he bought the house, Mr. Teller renovated the master bathroom and refurnished the house, which is decorated with a number of Bing Crosby photos and movie posters.

"I grew up kind of in awe of Bing Crosby," said Mr. Teller, who said his childhood home was about two blocks from the singer's house in Los Angeles. Years later, when a real-estate agent told him one of Mr. Crosby's former homes near Palm Springs was on the market, he was eager to take a look. "When she told me it was Bing Crosby's house, she had me hooked," he recalled.

Mr. Teller, whose primary home is in Orange County, purchased the house as vacation home. His wife, Rita, died of cancer about a year after he bought it, and since then, he hasn't spent much time there. He has rented it out for around 50 days a year at rates starting at about $3,000 a day.

Candace Taylor

Arne and Maud, Bing and Rosemary: "The Crosby-Clooney Story"

Long-time musical partners Arne Fogel and Maud Hixson brought long-time partners Bing and Rosemary Clooney to life on the Schneider Theater stage in Bloomington in December 2011 and we reported on this in BING #160 (spring 2012).

On July 11 and 12 this year, Arne and Maude reprised "Fancy Meeting You Here: The Crosby - Clooney Story" at the Chanhassen Dinner Theater in Minnesota. With Music Director Rick Carlson and the Wolverines, they presented beloved Crosby/Clooney songs of the 50s, 60s and 70s with a Friday evening and Saturday matinee show.

Arne is of course well-known to Crosby fans and Bob Protzman (*St Paul Pioneer Press*) called Arne "...one of the Twin Cities' most interesting people—a singer, musician, actor, composer, writer, producer, music-film-comedy and entertainment historian, collector and oral encyclopedia."

Andrea Canter, writing on jazzpolice.com gave further background information.

A native of Des Moines, IA, Arne has sung on over 1500 jingles as well as composing and producing his own music for jingles and industrial presentations. An on-air personality on MPR, KLBB, and KBEM radio, he is also frequently seen on TV commercials, lends his voice to radio and TV spots, and has experience in local theater. Arne has channeled Sinatra and Crosby throughout clubs in the Twin Cities.

Arne's exploits include the title role in *Bing and the Andrews Sisters* at the Bloomington Center for the Arts (2008); producing and hosting "The Bing Shift" on KBEM radio; producing/co-starring in a series of musical revues saluting Frank Sinatra, Hollywood, and the music of the 30s, 40s, and 50s at the Bloomington Center for the Arts; and writing, co-producing, and hosting 12 new episodes of the series *Bing's Basement* in Hollywood for Sirius XM Radio Network.

Maud Hixson, a St. Louis Park native, was named Best New Voice at the 2003 Hot Summer Jazz Festival. In 2006, she was selected to participate in the famed Cabaret Conference at Yale University, opening the door to a project funded through grants from the Minnesota Arts Board—a solo cabaret show, *Mickey and Maud: The Songs of Michael (Mickey) Leonard*, presented in December 2008 at New York City's oldest cabaret, the Duplex. Maud's discography includes a duo recording with Arne Fogel, *Let's Not Be Sensible* (2005) and her duo with husband Rick Carlson, *Love's Refrain*, which topped many area "best of the year" lists for 2007. She's often on stage at The Dakota and Parma 8200, and sang in the VocoMotion Showcase and with Arne at the 2014 Twin Cities Jazz Festival.

"Bob and Bing" in Kansas

We were delighted to learn of a show spotlighting Bob Hope and Bing which opened May 15, at The Chestnut Fine Arts Center in Olathe, Kansas. Here are some extracts from the review on Examiner.com.

Executive artistic director and accompanist for The Chestnut, Brad Zimmerman created a trip down memory lane for those who attended the show that ran through June 22, in his theater that lies 20 minutes southwest of Kansas City metro's center.

Zimmerman with his pair of co-stars for the "Bob and Bing" cavalcade of music also featured a bunch of "corn-fed" humor as well. Hope and Crosby just served as the spark to unite the show that showcased both serious and fun music from the Bob and Bing era.

With only a baby grand piano for backup, the cast for "Bob and Bing" included Cary Mock and Beth Benedict (as Dorothy Lamour) as well as Zimmerman. Mock showed off his piano expertise as he shared the keyboard with Zimmerman on several ditties and also played the accompaniment when Zimmerman was performing with Benedict. Mock also displayed some footwork when tapping was needed.

Benedict fit the bill to perfection. She was the sparkplug for jokes about the woman for whom the two stars competed for her attention. She sang solos, duets, trios, danced, and strutted in her numbers.

"Bob and Bing" worked well as an ensemble piece, allowing each performer the opportunity to demonstrate all their abilities. They worked well together and worked off each other well. Here are the songs used.

ACT ONE: "Teamwork," Zimmerman and Mock; "You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby"/ "Baby Face," Zimmerman, Mock and Benedict; "How Deep Is the Ocean," Mock; "The Merry-Go-Run-Around," Mock, Zimmerman and Benedict; "Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate the Positive," Benedict; "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter," Zimmerman; "Swinging on a Star," Mock and Zimmerman; "Paper Moon," Mock and Benedict; "Moonlight Becomes You," Mock, Zimmerman and Benedict; "Begin the Beguine," Mock; "Aba Daba Honeymoon," Benedict and Zimmerman; "Blue Skies," Benedict" "In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening," Mock, Zimmerman and Benedict' "Apalachicola, FLA," Zimmerman and Mock; "Side by Side," Zimmerman, Mock and Benedict.

ACT TWO: "Pistol Packin' Mama," Zimmerman, Mock and Benedict; "Buttons and Bows," Zimmerman and Benedict; "Don't Fence Me In," Mock; "I'm An Old Cowhand," Mock and Zimmerman; "Ol' Man River," Mock; "Hey Daddy," Benedict; "The Bells of St Mary's," Mock; "Adeste Fideles," Zimmerman, Mock and Benedict; "Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep," Benedict; "Do You Hear What I Hear," Mock; "Silver Bells," Benedict, Zimmerman and Mock; "White

Christmas," Zimmerman, Mock and Benedict; "Macnamara's Band," Zimmerman, Mock and Benedict; "You Lucky People, You," Mock; "Where the Blue of the Night," Benedict; "Without a Song." Mock; "Thanks for the Memory," Zimmerman, Benedict and Mock; "Teamwork" Zimmerman, Benedict and Mock.

A Tribute to Bing Crosby

Hamer Hall in Melbourne, Australia, was the place to be on September 15 when The Syncopators headlined concerts at 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. as a homage to Bing. The Syncopators, who are in their 30th Anniversary year, are recognized as one of the leading swing and classic jazz groups in Australia. The Australian Bing Crosby Society newsletter gave further details.

"A TRIBUTE TO BING CROSBY, WITH THE SYNCOPATORS" was the brainchild of Chris Ludowyk, trombonist with that band. Chris has been a staunch Crosby fan as long as he can remember, and we recently welcomed him into the ABCS. The Syncopators, created a warm, moving and - at times - humorous tribute to Bing. Well known Melbourne musician and singer Ash Gaudion provided vocals, of which Bing himself would be proud.

A complete list of musicians and song selections follows:- Peter Baylor, James Clark, Ashley Gaudion, Peter Gaudion, Rod Gilbert, Stephen Grant, Chris Ludowyk and Richard Miller.

Songs performed:- Did You Ever See a Dream Walking - I Love You Samantha - I Surrender Dear - Lazybones - Little One - Louisiana - Mississippi Mud - Moonlight Becomes You - Now You Has Jazz - Please - Road to Morocco - True Love (drummer Rod Gilbert substituted for Grace Kelly in the "True Love" duet with hilarious results).

Chris has reported to the ABCS that feedback has been very rewarding, with most of the capacity audience (full capacity is 2,661) commenting that this was one of the best *Morning Melodies* ever staged.

(Editor: Our grateful thanks to The Syncopators for this fine tribute.)

Meet Bing, Huddersfield Royal Infirmary's £80,000 dummy patient

So read the headline in the Huddersfield Daily Examiner in the UK on July 30. The article continued:-

He blinks as he listens to doctors, has a pulse, and has survived 10 heart attacks in a single day!

Meet Bing, Huddersfield Royal Infirmary's most valued patient. Named after the famous American crooner Bing Crosby, the £80,000 dummy is set to train generations of doctors, nurses and therapists.

Weighing in at exactly 11 stone (70kg), Bing is capable of simulating real life scenarios, even to the point of dilating his pupils.

Medics will use him to practise clinical procedures ranging from administering anaesthetics to tracheostomies and resuscitation.

The life-size dummy can be remotely controlled from behind a two-way mirror, mimicking high pressure emergency situations such as increased heart rate or cardiac arrest.

(Editor: Not sure that I really approve of Bing's name being linked with a dummy but whatever! I wonder who thought of using his name?)

Queen Elizabeth's Favourite

We were intrigued to come across this press cutting from 1945.

Has Collection Of Crooner's Recordings

By JOAN TWELFTREE

LONDON, Dec. 17 (UP).—Britain's 19-year-old Princess Elizabeth is a Bing Crosby fan and has collected scores of recordings by the American crooner which she plays on her phonograph—just like millions of other 'teen-age girls in her country and the United States.

The blue-eyed princess used to regard Clark Gable and Errol Flynn as her favorite actors, it was disclosed, but now she has decided that England's Laurence Olivier is "tops" among the screen players.

Friends disclosed today that Elizabeth's collection of Crosbiana ranges from one of Bing's first recordings, "Please," to his "You Gotta Accentuate the Positive." She shares her phonograph with her lively 15-year-old sister, Princess Margaret Rose.

Behind the scenes of the 1959 and 1960 "Christmas Sing with Bing" broadcasts

Greg Van Beek has another seasonal article for us.

Last Christmas season, for the winter 2013 issue of BING magazine, I featured some behind the scenes photos taken during the recording of Bing Crosby's second annual "A Christmas Sing with Bing" broadcast, which aired over CBS and other radio outlets around the world on Christmas Eve, 1956. This year, I offer some rare photos taken during the recording of the fifth and sixth installments of this traditional Christmas Eve yuletide sing-a-long.

For more information about the origins of the "Christmas Sing with Bing" broadcasts, please refer to BING magazine number 165, the winter 2013 issue, and my article about the 1956 edition.

The 1959 edition of *Christmas Sing* was recorded on December 15th, and the photos accompanying this article (taken for CBS radio by Art Lewis) have that date written on them. Bing was quite busy that week; immediately after recording the radio show at CBS in Hollywood, he began recording his first "sing-a-long" album the next two consecutive days at United Recorders, Hollywood. The album is titled "Join Bing and Sing Along", with a chorus and orchestra conducted by Jack Halloran, and is released by Warner Brothers Records.

During this same period, December 15-18, Gary Crosby recorded an album for Verve called "Gary Crosby Belts the Blues" at Radio Recorders, Hollywood with an orchestra conducted by Marty Paich.

"A Christmas Sing with Bing" aired on Thursday, December 24th from 9:05–10:00 p.m. As with previous installments, the program picked up Christmas music from around the world. Paul Weston conducted the orchestra and the Norman Luboff Choir added support. Bing introduced the song 'It's Christmas'. He never made a commercial recording of it.

For the 6th edition of "A Christmas Sing with Bing" in 1960, as indicated by the photographs and the dates etched onto them, the program was recorded at CBS Radio in Hollywood on December 11th. Two days later, on December 13, Bing and guest star Rosemary Clooney posed for publicity photos at a microphone and, in a different pose, carrying stacks of Christmas presents coming through a doorway.

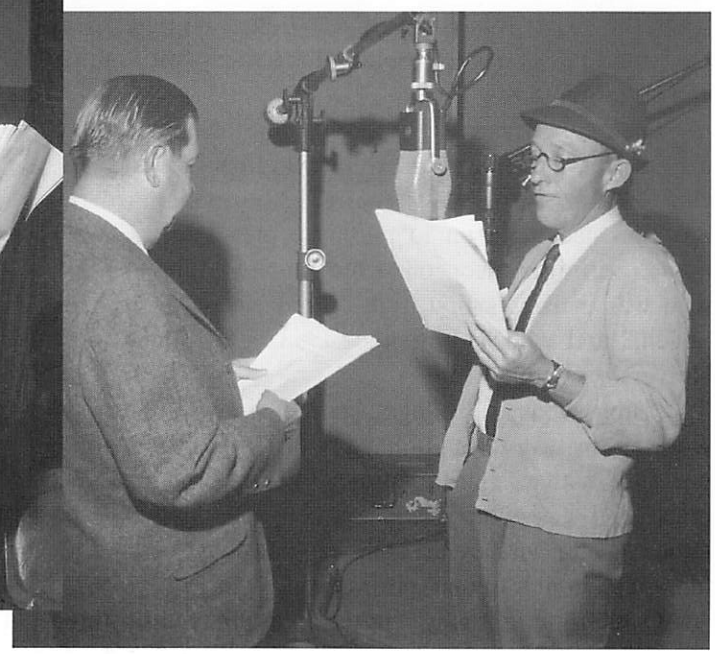
Other guests on the show that year included Rosemary's husband José Ferrer and Bing's wife Kathryn Crosby. The international format was dropped, and the accent was definitely on music. The program was again sponsored by the insurance company, INA. Bing sang 'Happy Holiday' (a snatch only), 'Joy to the World', 'It's Christmas', 'White Christmas', 'Jingle Bells', 'Away in a Manger' (with Kathryn Crosby), 'Silent Night' and a medley with Rosemary Clooney 'Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town', 'Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer' and 'Here Comes Santa Claus'. Bing, Kathryn, José and Rosie plus Ken Carpenter all joined in 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'.

As had been the tradition, the program aired on the evening of December 24th, originating from the CBS network and other radio outlets around the world. *Variety* and *The Daily Mirror* reviewed the show as follows:

> This was the sixth 'Christmas Sing with Bing' and the Yuletide Eve special is well on its way to becoming an institution which is all for the best since Crosby has that special sense of hominess and belonging that adds an extra kind of warmth to a season when the Christmas song-fests tend to lose their individuality. The 'Sing with Bing' remains something special, to look forward to each year. A change to format was offered this year, Crosby dropping the international flavor of season's past for a stay at home session with Rosemary Clooney, his regular CBS radio partner, her hubby Jose Ferrer and his own wife Kathryn as they swing, happily, through a wide category of Christmas songs from the newer pop standards right down to old-fashioned carols. The music was fine. Crosby and Miss Clooney were in top form and Miss Grant displayed a small but pretty voice. Ferrer added a reading of 'Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus' – the 1897 'New York Sun' editorial that was effective and overall the show had a fine sense of restrained gaiety. Two negatives however. One, was the fact that there was far too much talk and not enough music – at least in the first half of the show and Bill Morrow's rapid-fire dialogue tended to be a little over cute. Second – Far too many commercials for Insurance Company of North America and pretty hard sell at that. 'Sing with Bing' being almost an institution it seems about time the commercial aspect of it be accorded appropriately similar treatment. (*Variety*, December 28, 1960)

> One of the warmest, and unquestionably, the brightest entertainments of the holiday was "Christmas Sing with Bing". This old tar puffed contentedly on a huge Christmas stogie, which looked like a smokestack on our old battleship, as he enjoyed this annual Sing with Bing. The highlights of the party were the Groaner's baritoning of "Silent Night" and "White Christmas," and Ferrer's reading of the famous newspaper editorial, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus," which for pith and point is peerless. It is a classic of the Fourth estate.
> (*Daily Mirror*, December 27, 1960)

Greg Van Beek **tvanbeek@execpc.com**



Crosby superfan keeps crooner's legacy alive

Kristy Smith, writing in the Battle Creek Enquirer on August 14 had news of an old friend.

It didn't start out as an obsession. But when **Mark Scrimger** and his brothers began listening to a box of old 78s and 45s on a record player in their parents' basement, he developed an instant affinity for Bing Crosby.

"My dad was a TV repairman, so he always had around a lot of devices in various stages of repair," said Scrimger, of Battle Creek. Taking advantage of the electronics available, Scrimger became entranced hearing Bing's one of a kind treatments of "Now is the Hour" and "New San Antonio Rose."

"His voice sounded so perfect. He used a special microphone to record in a way that didn't distort the bass, so when he dipped down into a low note, it sounded completely natural," Scrimger said. "Unlike the vaudevillians who had come before him, Crosby was a crooner. He had taken elocution in school and knew how to phrase a song and make it intimate."

Scrimger's mother noticed him repeatedly playing the Crosby records and asked around to find others. To Scrimger's delight, an aunt came through with four more records.

"What makes this kind of funny was at the time I was a teen playing in a rock band" said Scrimger, who graduated from high school in 1970. "So when the group of us would go into a record store, the rest of the guys would be checking out Jimi Hendrix and Cream while I was asking for Bing Crosby stuff."

To learn more about Crosby and to trade information and Crosby items with other fans, Scrimger joined the "Club Crosby" American fan club in 1974. This led to discovery of a Crosby discography and a trip to Spokane, Wash., where Crosby's family had settled when the singer was about three. There, Scrimger spent the better part of a week looking for Crosby information and memorabilia.

Spokane proved to be a gold mine of contacts and information for Scrimger. He met and spoke with Mrs. C. P. Higgins, Crosby's former neighbor while growing up, who had gone on to purchase the former Crosby home. Scrimger also connected with Arthur Dussault, who was in Bing's first high school band, "The Dizzy Seven," and who had attended Gonzaga College (now University) with Crosby.

"Bing went to college, started studying law and working his way through in a law office. A lot of people don't know that," Scrimger said. "While Bing loved his music and was good at it, back then, unless you were a Broadway or vaudeville star, a musical career wasn't lucrative enough to make it financially."

Over time, Crosby started playing two-to-three musical gigs a week and eventually was making more money musically than the attorney he was working for was making practicing law. According to Scrimger, Crosby was a drummer in the band, but was unable to sing and play at the same time, so he would resort to just tapping on the cymbals.

Bing Crosby went on to become one of America's top entertainers. In addition to singing, and largely because of it, he also made about 70 motion pictures, all of which Scrimger has seen. From 1944-49, he was the top box office draw. Through his fame and fortune, Crosby remained loyal to both his record labels and his fan base, long retaining staff to help him respond to correspondence.

The more information Scrimger amassed on Crosby, the deeper his interest grew. Sensing the authenticity of it, many people with direct ties to Crosby sought to help Scrimger. Mrs. C. P. Higgins sent him early 1970s color photograph Christmas cards from the Crosby family. Other Crosby associates and other fans also sent information and Crosby items.

Mark Scrimger's mother painstakingly made him a quilt that features all of Bing Crosby's million-selling records.

For his part, Scrimger became friendly with the two women who were running Club Crosby. After Crosby died in 1977, Al Sutton took over as president of the organization, which had approximately 650 members. Scrimger offered Sutton interesting Crosby tidbits, with the suggestion Sutton's staff might want to write an article about it in one of the Club Crosby's bi-annual newsletters.

"Al replied to me, 'I am the staff,' and encouraged

me to research and write about things that would be of interest to other Crosby fans," Scrimger said.

Scrimger's knowledge and affection for Crosby and ability to submit articles on a timely basis led to Sutton naming him as president of Club Crosby when Sutton, then in his 80s, decided to retire from the post in 1986. Scrimger held the presidency until 2003, with Wayne Martin, 20 years his senior, serving as vice-president.

"Wayne was getting older and so was the Bing Crosby fan base," Scrimger said. "What had started out as a fan club with mostly girls and ladies who were infatuated with Bing had switched gears over the years to men who were more appreciative of the music." After Scrimger's departure, the fan club was merged with England's Crosby fan club, to become International Club Crosby.

Although no longer head of Crosby's American fan base, Scrimger nonetheless continued to collect Crosby music and memorabilia. This included a collection of items willed to him by Sutton. Scrimger cherishes the 108 well-preserved 78 records he owns and the 1200 pieces of Crosby sheet music protected within scores or plastic-sheeted albums.

Scrimger has also collected a lifetime of Bing Crosby photographs, movie scripts and personal and professional correspondence. From Bing Crosby coloring books to ice cream boxes, Scrimger has it all. He proudly displays the 2001 Guinness Book of World's Records designation the Club Crosby received for being the longest running fan club, having originated in 1936.

Aside from Crosby's crooning capability, what made him so appealing that Scrimger was willing to devote a lifetime to preserving his memory and an entire room of his home to Crosby memorabilia?

"I like the Horatio Alger story of it. A young, jazzy guy makes it big," Scrimger said. "Although I never personally met Bing, just his wife, Kathryn, and his sons Harry and Gary, I liked what Bing stood for. He was the perfect American: father, husband and friend. There was something about Bing that everyone could relate to. In an era of other singers, like the Rat Pack, Bing had a more wholesome appeal that did not involve booze, women and gambling.

"Along the way, my interest and collecting of Bing Crosby stuff has led to several lifelong friendships," Scrimger said. "That's made the experience even better."

Kristy Smith

Bing's tequila

In March, 1976, Bing and Phil Harris formed their own import company and launched their first product, Herradura Tequila, by recording a television commercial promoting it. Bing clearly knew a lot about tequila because later in the year he wrote to *Rolling Stone* magazine about it. Roger Schore spotted this in the December 2, 1976 edition of that magazine.

I much enjoyed reading Charles Perry's informative, well researched and interesting article "A Tequila Way of Knowledge" (RS 223). I spend a lot of time in the Guadalajara area and it is good to read something which is accurate and not just romantic nonsense, as is so often the case with stories about tequila.

However, I do disagree on a couple of points. Firstly, for a tequila to be called añejo or "aged" and to use the word on the label requires a certificate from the Mexican government and approval by our own authorities in Washington. At present only Herradura Añejo is so entitled. Excellent tequilas though they are, neither Sauza Conmemorativo nor Cuervo "1800" can yet make this claim.

Secondly, what may be a printer's error, almost all tequila sold in the U.S. is 80° proof, not 86° as stated. Herradura happens to be 92° and is distilled to this proof, unlike almost all other tequilas, which are distilled to 110° and then reduced with water to 80°.

Once again, thank you for an enjoyable and well-written story, and I must try and drop in on Señor Don Juan next time I am down Guadalajara way.

'Imbecile Slush': Surprising Early Reactions to Crooning

Amanda Wilde, writing on KUOW.org on July 2 took a look at the impact of the first crooners.

Crooner Bing Crosby in 1942.

In 1932, a new singing style was emerging: crooning. What we might consider easy listening now wasn't necessarily received cordially by its contemporaries. Cardinal O'Connell of Boston described it as "Imbecile slush" and "a degenerate form of singing."

Crooning took off in tandem with early radio. The invention of the microphone allowed for more vocal subtlety, and made it the perfect instrument for the likes of Bing Crosby.

"I Surrender Dear," released in 1931, was Crosby's first big solo hit. The song was so popular that legendary director Mack Sennett made a film short featuring the song.

Meanwhile CBS President William Paley quickly signed Crosby to his own radio show, which launched the singer's 30 years as a radio star.

Crooning was extremely popular with the public, but there was a lot of backlash, too. The New York Singing Teachers Association thought it would make a lasting

negative impact on society: "Crooning corrupts the minds and ideals of the younger generation."

According to author Ian Whitcomb in his book "The Coming of the Crooners," Lee DeForest, one of radio's inventors, regretted that his hopes for the medium as a dispenser of "golden argosies of tome" had become "a continual drivel of sickening crooning by 'sax' players interlaced with blatant sales talk."

Even in the famous 1936 Merrie Melodies cartoon *I Like to Singa*, young Owl Jolson is thrown out of his home for singing in the current jazz phrasing of the day.

While kicking his son out of the house, Papa Owl rants "You hotcha! You crooner! You falsetta! You jazz singer! You...you...you...!" He slams the door, then suddenly reopens it to add, "Phooey!"

A generation later, the same things were being said about rock and roll. As new genres caught on, crooning became re-categorized as easy listening. Which it obviously never was, at least for Lee DeForest and Cardinal O'Connell.

Amanda Wilde

Bing's vinyl albums on CD

Writing on the Crosby Fan World site last year, Carmela Amari queried how many of Bing's albums had been put on CD. Richard Baker gave a very detailed answer which has been used to produce the list below.

Roughly chronologically, starting from the point at which Bing recorded "albums" as such, therefore excluding all the albums that were compiled as collections of the earlier 78rpm recordings, we have the following which have all been on CD with the exception of those marked.

1 - Le Bing - Song Hits of Paris (issued by Universal last year. Also as part of Sepia "Through the Years" vol. 5)
2 - Some Fine Old Chestnuts (both as it was [MCA (Japan) MVCM 295] and as a twofer with 'New Tricks'. New 60th anniversary issue now available from Universal)
3 - White Christmas soundtrack
4 - Bing - A Musical Autobiography (Japanese issue complete on 3 CDs, from Avid on 4 CDs with extras, and tracks included in the "Through the Years" series)
5 - A Christmas Sing with Bing around the World" (as part of Sepia "Through the Years" vol. 10)
6 - High Tor (some tracks on a Harry Lillis CD only)
7 - Anything Goes – film soundtrack
8 - Songs I Wish I Had Sung (on Japanese CD MCA 25P-2 2832 – tracks also on Sepia "Through the Years" vol. 9. New issue from Universal now available.)
9 – New Tricks (both as it was [MCA Japan 25P-2 2833] and as a twofer with 'Some Fine Old Chestnuts')
10 - Bing Sings Whilst Bregman Swings
11 - High Society – soundtrack
12 - Bing with a Beat
13 - Fancy Meeting You Here
14 - Say One for Me – soundtrack
15 - How the West Was Won (on German "Bear Family" CD only)
16 - Join Bing and Sing Along 33 Great Songs
17 - El Senor Bing (with extras)
18 - Bing and Satchmo
19 - Join Bing and Sing Along 101 Gang Songs (2 LPs) – (on CD in part only)
20 - Holiday in Europe (Japanese CD only)
21 - The Road to Hong Kong – film soundtrack
22 - On the Happy Side (not issued yet on an "official" CD)
23 - On the Sentimental Side (included for completeness – never issued as an LP but now on CD)
24 - I Wish You a Merry Christmas
25 - Return to Paradise Islands (with extras)
26 - Bing Crosby Sings the Great Country Hits
27 - America, I Hear You Singing
28 - Robin and the Seven Hoods
29 - Twelve Songs of Christmas
30 - That Travelin' Two-Beat
31 - Bing Crosby's Treasury, The Songs I Love (on Harry Lillis CD only)
32 - Thoroughly Modern Bing
33 - Hey Jude, Hey Bing (not issued on an "official" CD yet)
34 – Goldilocks (songs on Harry Lillis CD only)
35 - A Time to Be Jolly
36 - Bing 'n Basie
37 - A Southern Memoir – (with extras)
38 - That's What Life Is All About
39 - At My Time of Life
40 - Bingo Viejo (not yet issued on an "official" CD)
41 - A Couple of Song and Dance Men
42 - The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (reading) (not issued on CD)
43 - Feels Good, Feels Right
44 - Beautiful Memories
45 - The Palladium Concert - (with omissions from the 2-LP set)
46 - Seasons – (with 'The Final Chapter')
47 - The Final Chapter (not originally intended as an LP though issued as such) – (with 'Seasons' plus extras)

Then there are the children's stories Bing recorded in 1957 which were not really long-playing albums but should perhaps be considered as part of this review.

A Christmas Story (How Lovely Is Christmas) (on CD)
Jack B. Nimble – A Mother Goose Fantasy (on CD)
Ali Baba and the 40 Thieves 40 (on CD)
Never Be Afraid (The Emperor's New Clothes)
(songs on Harry Lillis CD only)

So, to summarise, full scale, complete and legitimate CDs have not yet been released for:

High Tor - Never Be Afraid (The Emperor's New Clothes) - Join Bing and Sing Along 101 Gang Songs - On the Happy Side - Bing Crosby's Treasury, The Songs I Love - Hey Jude, Hey Bing – Goldilocks - Bingo Viejo - The Adventures of Tom Sawyer - The Palladium Concert

Some of those would be more "commercial" than others of course with "Hey Jude, Hey Bing" being top of many collectors' lists. It would be nice to hear an alternative ending to the song "Hey Jude" if one exists though. "Holiday in Europe" has only been released on a Japanese CD and would be very welcome if reissued. "Bing 'n Basie" is another that would go well as a re-release especially if the unissued track "If I Had a Hammer" was included. "A Time to Be Jolly" was last issued on CD in 1994. However, it may well be that downloads will replace compact discs in the coming years so I hope that we shall see some of these on CD before long.

Bing's films on DVD

Carmela also queried which of Bing's full-length starring role films had not yet been released on DVD. We are not always sure which issues are legitimate or not. For instance a company called *Loving the Classics* issues many films on DVD which they believe are in the public domain but they do not have access to the original films themselves so quality is variable. Similar comments apply to VintageFilmBuff.com (now defunct?) and to Emoviez, companies which issue films thought to be in the public domain on DVD. With those reservations in mind, here goes anyway. These are all on DVD except where annotated.

1 – The Big Broadcast (*Loving the Classics* DVD only)
2 – College Humor
3 – Too Much Harmony (*Loving the Classics* DVD only)
4 – Going Hollywood
5 – We're Not Dressing
6 – She Loves Me Not (VintageFilmBuff.com DVD only)
7 – Here Is My Heart
8 – Mississippi
9 – Two for Tonight (VintageFilmBuff.com DVD only)
10 – Anything Goes (1935) (VintageFilmBuff.com DVD only)
11 – Rhythm on the Range
12 – Pennies from Heaven
13 – Waikiki Wedding
14 – Double or Nothing
15 – Doctor Rhythm (not issued on DVD)
16 – Sing You Sinners
17 – Paris Honeymoon (*Loving the Classics* DVD only)
18 – East Side of Heaven
19 – The Star Maker (*Loving the Classics* DVD only)
20 – Road to Singapore
21 – If I Had My Way
22 – Rhythm on the River
23 – Road to Zanzibar
24 – Birth of the Blues
25 – Holiday Inn (also on Blu-ray)
26 – Road to Morocco
27 – Star Spangled Rhythm
28 – Dixie (Region 2 only)
29 – Going My Way
30 – Here Come the Waves
31 – Road to Utopia
32 – The Bells of St. Mary's (also on Blu-ray)
33 – Blue Skies
34 – Welcome Stranger
35 – Variety Girl (Region 2 plus DVD-R in USA)
36 – The Emperor Waltz
37 – Road to Rio
38 – A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court
39 – Top O' the Morning (*Loving the Classics* DVD only)
40 – The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad (also on Blu-ray)
41 – Riding High
42 – Mr. Music (not issued on DVD)
43 – Here Comes the Groom
44 – Just for You
45 – Road to Bali
46 – Little Boy Lost (not issued on DVD)
47 – White Christmas (also on Blu-ray)
48 – The Country Girl
49 – Anything Goes (1956)
50 – High Tor (not issued on DVD)
51 – High Society
52 – Man on Fire (not issued on DVD)
53 – Say One for Me
54 – High Time (issued on Blu-ray but not DVD)
55 – The Road to Hong Kong
56 – Robin and the Seven Hoods
57 – Stagecoach
58 – Dr. Cook's Garden (*Loving the Classics* DVD only)

Summary:

Perhaps, in due course, with the growing popularity of on demand Internet streaming, DVDs will become a thing of the past. However, in the meantime, Universal have just issued their *Silver Screen Collection* containing 24 of Bing's films but sadly it does not pick up some of the omissions.

So, mint and legitimate DVDs using original source material for the following would be very welcome with "Mr. Music" and "Top O' the Morning" being your editor's top choices.

The Big Broadcast - Too Much Harmony - She Loves Me Not - Two for Tonight - Anything Goes (1935) - Doctor Rhythm - Paris Honeymoon - The Star Maker - Top O' the Morning - Mr. Music - Little Boy Lost - High Tor - Man on Fire - Dr. Cook's Garden

Malcolm Macfarlane

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Gord Atkinson, 14 Castle Harbour Crt., Ottawa, ON K2S 1B9, Canada.

Gord's *The Crosby Years* series of CDs remains available direct from him. US members can obtain the CDs for $18.00 US each which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $18.00 for each CD. Payment can be made by check or money order to Gord Atkinson. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks. For a sample, Gord recommends either (or both) the Prologue and Epilogue which summates the series.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £11 each.

John Bassett, "Bingville", 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex SS4 1RZ, UK

"Alternate Bing Crosby – Vol. 2". Issued as a companion volume to Colin Pugh's invaluable 1988 publication (still available from the ICC), this 64-page edition continues the story by examining every alternate take discovered since that first edition. In total, 119 titles are dealt with in this A4 size publication, currently available at £7.50 (including postage). All remittances in £ sterling should be made payable to John Bassett and sent to him at the address above. (Overseas costs available upon request).

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com – website: www.fesfilms.com/)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your NTSC requirements for Bing on DVD. They also have thousands of Public Domain films and TV shows. Films are sold on DVD-R and Mpeg2 video file formats.

Matthew Long, 62 Stroud Road, Shirley, Solihull, West Midlands B90 2JT, UK. (E-mail: appleberrywine@live.co.uk)

ICC member Matthew is a jazz and easy listening vocalist and he has recently recorded his first album featuring celebrated songs from Perry Como, Frank Sinatra, Matt Monro and many more. The album includes songs such as "Catch a Falling Star, "I've Got You Under My Skin" and "A Portrait of My Love", plus Matthew's very own single "Dancing With You" composed by Lamar Pecorino. The album has been licensed by MCPS for composer royalties, is professionally manufactured and available now on CD for just £5, plus £1.50 postage (60p per additional copy). Contact Matthew direct.

John C. Marshall, 39 Kings Rd., Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0QD, UK (email: carson1812@blueyonder.co.uk)

BING—A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES has emerged as a fully fledged DVD—with the considerable plus of the four part '+CELLULOID CENTURY' featuring 400 vintage movie posters from the 30's, 40's, 50's and 60's. £10.00 including p. & p. Please note, UK orders only. Order direct from John, please.

McFarland, Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640, USA (Orders only Tel: 800-253-2187, email: info@mcfarlandpub.com)

Members will recall that Ken Crossland and your Editor wrote an award-winning book called **"Perry Como-A Biography and Complete Career Record"** a year or two back. The book is still available as a softcover and as an ebook. Cost $25. Print ISBN: 978-0-7864-7166-9, Ebook ISBN: 978-1-4766-0024-6. The book has 73 photos, discography, bibliography, index. 310pp. softcover (7 x 10). A Google search should find it easily but if not go to: www.mcfarlandpub.com/book-2.php?id=978-0-7864-7166-9

Oxford University Press reminds us that:

Late Life Jazz: The Life and Career of Rosemary Clooney by Ken Crossland and Malcolm Macfarlane continues to be available from Amazon, or direct from Oxford University Press at:

http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780199798575.do

Prices: $23.96 (Amazon USA), $26.84 (Amazon USA – Kindle), Can$29.95, £18.99 (UK), £17.09 (UK - Kindle). The book has recently been awarded a Certificate of Merit for Best Historical Research in Recorded Popular Music by the prestigious Association for Recorded Sound Collections.

The Record Centre, 43, Presthope Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4NJ, UK (Tel: 0121-476-9619 email: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Mail Order only. Free lists available by email. Ray Purslow has always been a real supporter of the Crosby cause and for your Bing and other easy listening artists' CDs, please contact Ray.

Crosby Clubs Around the World

The ICC is very pleased to be associated with the Australian Bing Crosby Society. The society's details are:

The Australian Bing Crosby Society

Peter De Ryk, 11 Holden Rd., Kallista, Victoria 3791, Australia (tel. [03] 9755 3013 – email: abcsoc@dodo.com)

The Society has been running since 1977 having originally been formed by the late Bob Machliss. Bi-monthly newsletters are issued and there are regular film nights.

The film night for August featured *Rhythm on the River* with the Doris Day movie *It's a Great Feeling* in support. On October 21, *The Bells of St. Mary's* was the main attraction with *Perry Como – Singing at His Best* making up the programme. The October gathering doubled as the Society's annual general meeting. The final film night for 2014 will be held on December 9. The venue is the Library behind the Collingwood Town Hall complex at 11 Stanton St., Abbotsford, Melbourne.

Internet sites:

www.BingCrosby.com

This comes under the Bing Crosby Enterprises banner and contains a mass of information plus some excellent audio and video vaults which contain much rare material.

Bing Crosby on Facebook

This also comes under the auspices of Bing Crosby Enterprises and Bing's Facebook page is at:

www.facebook.com/pages/Bing-Crosby/44544738326

Daily entries are made and the number of people who have "liked" the site has now risen to over 269,000. I hope they will all buy the new DVD and CD releases!

Bing Crosby on Twitter

See www.twitter.com/Bingconstantly for this site which has lots of useful tweets. It has grown to 4702 followers now.

@Bing_Crosby is still the place to go for Bing Crosby Inc. There are 2338 followers as we go to press.

BING magazine

This site contains a considerable amount of reference material and Lionel Pairpoint's marvellous radio book, Frans van der Kolff's incredible "Songography" and Keith Parkinson's magnificent "The A-Z of Bing's Movies" can all be accessed. Your editor's book "Bing Crosby – Day by Day" is on the site too. All of these books are being updated as new information arises. See www.bingmagazine.co.uk

A Bing Crosby Discography

Maintained by our member, J. Richard Baker (known as Jarbie), this excellent site can be found at:

http://tinyurl.com/BingCrosbyDiscography

Crosby Fan World

This bulletin board type site is at:
http://crosbyfanworld.boardhost.com/
Mature and knowledgeable contributions are being made and the site is sensibly moderated by Richard Baker. If you have any Bing news please consider making an entry on the site and if there are any Crosby matters you want to discuss, this is an ideal place to do so.

Jon Oye's Blog

ICC stalwart Jon has his own first-class blog with several pages about Bing showing many rare items from his collection. Go to: http://derbingle.blogspot.com/

The Bing Crosby News Archive

David Lobosco runs this blog which has news and many stories about Bing at http://bingfan03.blogspot.co.uk/

Tony Meade's blog

Tony has an interesting and varied site at http://bingsphotos.blogspot.co.uk/

John Marshall's "The Written Word"

John's excellent PowerPoint presentations "A Night At The Movies" and "The Written Word" can now be found by typing *internet archive john c marshall bing-the written word* into your search engine.

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com, website: www.flias.com/)

A magazine called *Laine Lines* is published three times a year.

International Al Jolson Society, c/o Sandy Gerloff, 419 Glenwood Drive, Douglassville, PA 19518, USA (email: Flufftwo@dejazzd.com - website: www.jolson.org)

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, email: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Nat King Cole International Fan Club, c/o Roy Holmes, 18 Rutland Drive, Morden, Surrey SM4 5QH, UK (phone: 020-8648-8858, website: www.highstreets.co.uk/kcc/index.shtml)

King Cole Comments is the club's newsletter and this is issued three times each year. For a free copy, please send a SAE to Roy Holmes.

Sinatra Music Society - Mrs. Pat Harvey, National Secretary, 11 Mossbank Avenue, Burntwood, Staffordshire WS7 4UN, UK (tel: 01543-899771, www.sinatramusicsociety.com/).

A quarterly magazine called *Perfectly Frank* is issued. Fees within the UK are £15 a year; £19 for European membership and £23 for the rest of the world. Ken Barnes, who made those great albums with Bing in the 70s, is the Honorary President.

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 003531 8212418).

Meetings take place at 8:00 pm, second Monday of every month in the Tara Towers Hotel, Dublin 4.

Have you seen

Memory Lane

the acclaimed quarterly magazine for lovers of 1920s, 1930s and 1940s music? Although the emphasis is on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, Memory Lane also covers the American bands, jazz, variety, etc. Al Bowlly - Britain's favourite vocalist is regularly featured.

Memory Lane is quality printed, fully illustrated and nicely presented with articles, CD reviews, Readers Letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read. A "must" for 78 RPM collectors.

Memory Lane also issues CDs mainly of British dance bands and vocalists, DVDs, runs guided walks in central London identifying the locations where the bands used to play, etc. and hosts nostalgic events in London.

Initial annual subscription only £10 (UK) or £15 (overseas) for readers of BING magazine. (Normal price £15 - UK, £20 - overseas.) Please send cheque payable to "Memory Lane" to **Memory Lane, P O Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England.**

Or visit our web site - www.memorylane.org.uk where you can pay on-line.

The Written Word

An Introduction by John Marshall carson1812@blueyonder.co.uk

Back in the earliest 80's, whom among its meagre 207 members would have taken bets on the *Crosby Chronicles* still playing a part in far off 2014? Over its four and half years the contents had relied almost exclusively on the *Variety* archive in the British Film Institute at the South Bank. This involved eye boggling hours at a microfilm screen Xeroxing expensive, faded copies of ancient newsprint so that each quarter's fifty pages held as close to accurate Crosbyana as one was likely to get . Anyone writing on the subject recognised this relatively unimpeachable source, as did Malcolm Macfarlane when some years later he embarked on his ambitious Bing Diary, or authors such as Gary Giddins. Tedious, time consuming and prone to errors during the business of transposing via a battered typewriter, there was nothing to prevent the author gilding the lily or presenting these facts in a way best suited to his particular purpose so when I decided to re-enter the field it was entirely due to a genuine technical breakthrough. Moving away from the relatively narrow restrictive *Variety* viewpoint into the vastly wider world of commercial newspapers was in itself liberating while being able to transplant the actual material *unedited and exactly as printed* made the technique a remarkable innovation in its own right. All relevant photographic art work included. If you were interested in the many varied threads of Bing's life and times the newspapers of the day were where you'd find it so now, rather than someone's version of these countless articles and news items "*You are there*". On the actual day while the ink was still wet .....

June 19, 1949

College Poll Picks Favorite Musicians

Top name band leaders may believe in ghosts as a result of Billboard Magazine's eleventh annual College Poll to determine the nation's most popular orchestras, vocalists and entertainers. At any rate, the old "ghost rider" himself, Vaughn Monroe walked away with top honors in the dance band division.

Stan Kenton, last year's winner, placed fifth. Second and third places were snagged by Tommy Dorsey and Tex Beneke. The other main surprises found Les Brown jumping from tenth slot last year to fourth this time, and Harry James dropping completely out of the top ten.

MONROE

CROSBY

DORIS DAY

CUGAT

Bing Crosby, Perry Como and Billy Eckstine finished in one, two, three order as favorite male artists with Doris Day, Jo Stafford and Peggy Lee in the female devision. Other first placers in their respective departments were: The King Cole Trio, Pied Pipers, Xavier Cugat, and Spike Jones. Jones took the top "corn" honors with some joke-

JONES

LOMBARDO

sters voting for Guy Lombardo in that division. However, Lombardo, as usual, did more than all right. The Royal Canadians placed sixth in the over-all polling and third in the sweet band department. The crew has just been re-signed to a three year-$500,000 transcription contract, pacted a deal for television and continues with the never-ending flow of phonograph records and radio shows. Guy, who has many money-making ventures outside the music field, including an airline and a publishing house, opened a restaurant Friday at Freeport, Long Island.

Big Musical Comedy Now At Oriental

BING CROSBY KEEPS GREAT COMPANY as Paramount's show of shows, "Star Spangled Rhythm," which opened today at the Oriental Theatre. Here he is with three of the more than forty famous stars in the film, Dorothy Lamour, Veronica Lake, Paulette Goddard.

December 4, 1970

By JOAN CROSBY

HOLLYWOOD — (NEA) — Bing Crosby was having a dressing room lunch break, which means things like cottage cheese out of a cardboard cup, a salad on a paper plate and coffee in a plastic cup.

He had just left the NBC sound stage where he was taping Bing Crosby's Christmas Show, a Bell System Family Theater special, to be seen on Dec. 16. Melba Moore, Jack Wild, the Doodletown Pipers and a gaggle of other Crosbys (wife Kathryn and children Mary Frances, Nathaniel and Harry) also appear.

But the conversation was about "Dr. Cook's Garden," a Movie of the Week for ABC-TV, which will be seen sometime after the first of the year. It was filmed in Woodstock, Vt., and casts Crosby as, of all things for him, a killer. A kindly killer who doesn't like to see anyone suffer, but a murderer nonetheless.

"Did I have second thoughts about playing a murderer?" Bing said. "No. I just thought it was a good play. Was I worried about my image? Not at all. I've forgotten all about that. Life right now is very bland. I'm serene. That's the word."

Bing travels a lot, rushing off to Africa, South America, his home in La Paz (in Baja California), to Pittsburgh to see the Pirates during the baseball season and so on.

"There's not a lot of call for my services," he says, "so there's plenty of time to move around."

For a man who doesn't have many calls, he's going to be seen a lot on the tube.

He's on the John Wayne special, Swing Out, Sweet Land, playing Mark Twain. "I don't look as much like Twain as Hal Holbrook," he says.

He's also going to be on a Flip Wilson show, a Carol Burnett show, a Dean Martin show, two American Sportsman shows, his golf tournament and the Christmas show and movie special.

The part he would most like to play is Ben Franklin. He was particularly intrigued with the musical Robert Preston did on Broadway, "Ben Franklin in Paris." Bing would like to do it as a TV special.

"But," he says and it's a sad commentary on TV today, "I can't get any producers interested in the project."

Even if that doesn't work, Bing says he is determined to portray Franklin in some aspect of his career.

Because his young children (they are 9, 11 and 12) by Kathy work with him so much, it's assumed they are going to have show business careers. He's not sure.

"I want to wait first and see if they have talent," he says. "They're cute kids but how do you know if they have enough talent? If you try this business and you don't have enough talent, it's frustrating."

What's his appraisal of these cute kids? "Well," he said, drawing on his ever-present pipe, "they never look to me like they have any talent. I always think they should be better."

October 31, 1941

Four Sons Welcome Crosby Home

ON HAND to welcome Actor Bing Crosby home Thursday from his South American trip were his four sons (left to right), Dennis and Philip, the twins; Lindsay and Gary. Returning to Pasadena, Calif., on the train with Bing was his wife, the former Dixie Lee, who had met him in New York. —AP Wirephoto

These examples are not intended for reading purposes only to illustrate the look of the 300 pages involved. Again, unfortunately, The Written Word is available only On Line where Web addresses seem to vary but were you to Google **INTERNET ARCHIVE JOHN C MARSHALL BING- THE WRITTEN WORD** it's all there

The Amazing Mr. Jordan

HE PROVED THAT SMALL BANDS COULD DO BIG BUSINESS; RECORDS PUSHING CROSBY

Louis Jordan and Bing Crosby recording "Your Socks Don't Match" and "My Baby Said Yes" for Decca Records. Sales for Jordan's disks are second only to Bing.

Perhaps the most amazing man in show business today is Louis Jordan who, with his Tympany Five, bridged the gap between cocktail lounges and the huge stages of the biggest theatres, night clubs and auditoriums in the country within the space of only a few years.

Not only is he a skilled musician but also a stage, screen and radio personality; comedian; top recording artist; and famed song writer.

Jordan is looked upon by the trade as being primarily responsible for the small unit business becoming one of the most lucrative in the entertainment world.

Demanded Featured Booking

Not content with playing cocktail lounges, he forced his managers to get him night club bookings as featured attraction, not as relief band to which small combinations had been relegated, and theatre engagements.

People in the "know" asserted that nothing could be done with a small unit on that large a scale, but Jordan proved otherwise and through him the door to opportunity and stardom was opened for other fine small units.

It was never believed that small units could become best-sellers in the popular record field until Jordan proved the point. Today his records are second only to Bing Crosby in Decca sales and a "must" for successful juke box operation.

Opened Recording Doors

Recording company doors were opened to small combinations because of Jordan and the many companies manufacturing records today are constantly searching for small units with possibilities. It's interesting to note that Jordan doesn't record so-called "No-I-Plug" tunes but introduces new material and lets them become favorites strictly on their own merit.

Jordan has appeared in Universal, Columbia, Republic and Monogram pictures. However, his film activities haven't made him particularly happy inasmuch as he believes a colored artist can be featured in roles other than servitude or comedy relief.

This feeling is so strong that he has refused many picture offers and risked making his own films. So far only two have been completed; a two-reeler musical, "Caldonia," which introduced the hit song of the same name, and the feature-length "Beware."

To Make Mixed Film

Both of these efforts have all-colored casts (the feminine lead in "Beware" is Valerie Black of the N.Y. company of "Anna Lucasta"). However, plans are being completed for a mixed-cast feature to be filmed in the fall.

In addition to his pioneering, Jordan is a prolific songwriter and discoverer of hits. Among those either written or introduced by him are: "Outskirts of Town," "Knock Me a Kiss," "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby," "Caldonia," "Land of the Buffalo Nickel," "Salt Pork, West Virginia," and "Don't Worry 'Bout That Mule."

Jordan was born in Brinkley, Ark., 28 years ago; plays alto and tenor saxophone and clarinet; received his early musical education from his father who was a music teacher; ran away from home during summer vacations from high school to work in a traveling minstrel show;

First Break With Webb

Is a graduate of Arkansas Baptist College; made his big-time debut as musician-vocalist with the late Chick Webb's orchestra; achieved his first recognition through being featured with that organization. After Webb's death he organized his Tympany Five that was "at liberty" more than it was on the band stand.

He was on the verge of disbanding the outfit when offered a contract to appear in a Chicago cocktail lounge. Being completely discouraged with unfilled promises, he tossed a coin to see whether or not to accept. He won the job and he's continued up the ladder to stardom ever since.

June 7, 1947

NEW YORK—Bing Crosby will act as honorary chairman for the Louis Jordan Testimonial Dinner, June 30, to be held at the Hotel Pierre.

The testimonial celebrates Jordan's twentieth year in show business. The proceeds will benefit Camp Willowemoc, an interracial, interfaith camp for small children.

In the past 20 years, Jordan has come a long, hard way. It wasn't until seven years ago that he first "clicked" in Chicago and then rapidly rose to fame.

He has been admitted into the coveted Decca Million Club along with Crosby and just a handful of others with his "Choo Choo Ch Boogie" which sold a million records and has produced his third film with Astor Pictures.

Brian Willey looks at his books about Bing

I well recall becoming aware of Bing Crosby when really quite young – his voice was very familiar, constantly heard on the family gramophone. It was all a long time ago. Not as far back as a million years BC, of course, but a long way back in my lifetime. My father had a great liking for Bing's voice and his records, so often on the turntable, left me in no doubt who Bing was and what he sounded like. It was inevitable that I should also become a fan – and in later years his films just had to be seen.

Bing duly autographed the book for Cecil.

The years rolled by and when I reached my early forties I had the good fortune – via my work with the BBC – to have the expectation to actually meet and work with the great man. The moment of realization made it essential to read up about him, for I needed to know much more than I did. Was there a biography I could acquire? In a phone conversation with my dad, he told me he had a book about Bing entitled 'Call Me Lucky' – given to him by a friend back in the mid-50s. When dad had received the book I was no longer living at home, so I had never seen it, but now it had to be borrowed immediately. No doubt many readers of this magazine are well aware of the book but, for those that are not, it was first published in Britain in 1953 and was obviously a best seller because dad's copy was the fourth edition and it was then only 1954. So here was I, almost 20 years later, avidly reading and absorbing all I could about this American gentleman I was planning to meet. It was a pleasure to read, and packed with stories and illustrations of many people I would eventually encounter. It also gave me a good insight into the man himself and was most useful in allowing me to plan for questions I could ask him about his life, so that the future radio audience could hear his answers first hand. Although twenty years had passed since the book was published, it was a very frank portrayal and it gave me a good idea of what I might find in our hero.

I would take the book with me and re-read it on my journey. There was also another intention for taking it with me – hopefully to get Bing to autograph it for my dad! Mr Cecil Willey will be overjoyed.

And so I duly arrived in Los Angeles and contacted the Bing Crosby Enterprises office, located in North Hollywood. The power behind the throne was Bing's business manager, Mr Basil Grillo, who was most helpful in every way, including allowing me to use Bing's own office whenever it was available. That was an unexpected privilege and I felt most proud to be seated in the old groaner's very own chair and admire the silver-mounted telephone that adorned the desk.

There was a bookcase in the office and one of its shelves displayed a row of slim volumes. Not a selection, for they were all the same, just half an inch thick and bound in a purple flock-covered stiff paper. The spine bore the words: BING CROSBY – FIRST EDITION. I eagerly plucked a copy off the shelf and thumbed its pages. Its flyleaf read as follows:

BING
by Ted and Larry Crosby
First Edition
Illustrated with Many Single and Grouped Engravings
Los Angeles
THE BOLTON PRINTING Co., Inc.
Printers and Publishers
Copyright 1937

So, 'Call Me Lucky' was not the first biographical book. This one pre-dated it by some fifteen years. Authored by Bing's two elder brothers, it was obviously written out of pure admiration for their little brother, who was attaining an enviable reputation.

Further pages revealed a dedication that read: *With Fond Recollections to Mother and Bing* – and then followed a preface by Bing:

"It's difficult for me to imagine anyone seriously

interested in my biography, but my brothers have long importuned me for permission to write it, and when they exhibited encouraging letters from a prospective publisher, I blushingly consented. The following result proves the brothers are naturally inclined to make somewhat of a hero of me. But however sophomoric their efforts, all incidents are true. This thing is hardly offered as a guide to aspirants for success in show business, but only indicates what a lucky guy I am – so far."

The book's 200 pages included ten pages of pictures – two full-page plates of Bing and Dixie Lee and eight further pages of small photos gathered as collections of memorabilia. I was immediately fascinated by it and mentioned my delight to Basil Grillo. "You have a great many of them," I said, and then tentatively asked, "I suppose I couldn't have one?" He frowned a bit and said they were rather special and those copies were all that remained. But one of them had its cover badly bleached by the sun and was unsightly. I could have that one.

I treasure it to this day but I have always regretted never getting it autographed by Bing, simply because I daren't ever reveal to him that I had one, in case he disapproved or even thought I had nicked it! Ah well!

Brian at work in Bing's office

At the time I commenced work on the radio series I had no idea how many Bing biographies existed – and neither did Charles Thompson who was to be my writer and interviewer. Once the practical work began, Charles realized that between us we would interview so many of Bing's friends and colleagues that everything that could be known about Bing's life would be gathered, thus assembling all the material required to write a new book. When Charles told me of his intention I thought it was a wonderful plan, for the radio programmes would have only an ephemeral life – but a book will last forever.

The number of personalities we were to interview grew larger by the day and, if my memory serves me well, between us we met some 250 people, all of whom were vital to the final story. Charles claims that he spent around four years putting his book together. All I can say to that is thank goodness I managed to put the radio programmes together in far less time – as many months as Charles's years, for sure. Although I may be accused of prejudice, I thought his book, 'BING', was brilliantly written and a joy to read – and Bing thought so too!

So to book number four on my bookshelf. After Bing had died, Charles Thompson revised and augmented his book and the new edition – 'The Complete Crosby' – appeared in 1978, to be closely followed by a splendid volume by record producer Ken Barnes titled, 'The Crosby Years'. It isn't just a biography, it contains hundreds of photos and is also a complete discography and filmography of Bing's entire life's work. An astonishing volume containing everything you may wish to know about him.

Those books have given me many hours of pleasurable reading and are essential for any Bing aficionado's bookshelf – perhaps with the exception of that very first one which I have never seen for sale.

That being the extent of my awareness of Bing biographies, I have since learned there are enough about to fill a whole bookcase and will mention just a few more. There were two memoirs published in the States in the late 1940s, one by J. T. H Mize and another by Barry Ulanov. The original 1937 book was updated and reissued in 1946 with only Ted Crosby credited as author. Bing's own autobiography, 'Call Me Lucky', was reissued in 1993 with a foreword by Gary Giddins who in 2001 compiled his own wonderful account of Bing, entitled 'A Pocketful of Dreams'. As we know, it was Volume One and all of the ICC now eagerly awaits the second volume. Perhaps it will be in time for this Christmas!

Happy Bing reading – whichever books you select.

Brian Willey

America, I Hear You Singing: A Musical Celebration in a Time of Mourning

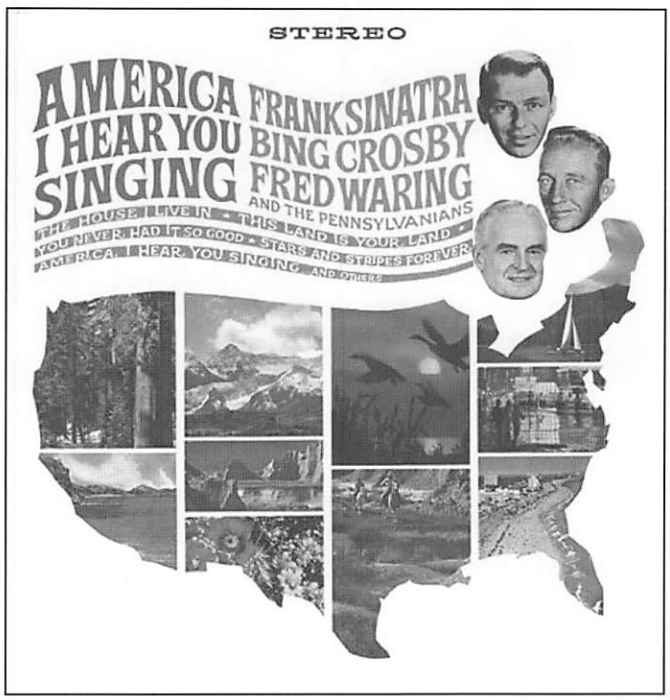
Anton Garcia-Fernandez is a literature and language professor at The University of Tennessee at Martin, Tennessee, U.S.A. Although he is European by birth, on December 9, 2013, he became a U.S. citizen after many years of living and working in the USA. The naturalization ceremony took place at the Western District Courthouse in Memphis, Tennessee (about 2 hours from Martin, where his wife, their baby daughter, and Anton make their home) and Anton says that it was definitely one of the most moving moments in his whole life. As part of such a momentous occasion, he listened to Bing and Frank's album 'America, I Hear You Singing,' both during the car ride to Memphis and on the way back, after

officially becoming a U.S. citizen. He now discusses the album in greater depth.

Though they appeared together on radio, films, television, and records as early as the 1940s—and cut the engaging duet "Well, Did You Evah?" for the soundtrack of *High Society*—Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra never recorded an entire album together. Crosby did make whole LPs with other singers, notably Rosemary Clooney, Louis Armstrong, and Fred Astaire, yet if we take a look at Sinatra's collaborations throughout his career, they always find him joining efforts with musicians and songwriters, such as Count Basie, Duke Ellington, and António Carlos Jobim, never with other vocalists, at least not for full-length albums. The closest they ever came to cutting a set of duets is *America, I Hear You Singing*, recorded in 1964 for Reprise, a lesser-known entry in the discographies of both men, and so overlooked over the years that it was not reissued on CD until 2010—and then only in Europe, even though it is one of the most decidedly patriotic outings by both Der Bingle and the Chairman.

This longtime unavailability in a digital format may go a long way to explain the neglect that *America* has suffered at the hands of critics, who hardly ever mention it when discussing the oeuvres of Crosby and Sinatra. For instance, in his essential study *Sinatra! The Song Is You*, Will Friedwald analyzes virtually all of Sinatra's albums in depth but refers to *America* briefly as "a patriotic collection apparently inspired . . . by the murder of the President [John F. Kennedy]" (417). Likewise, in *Sessions with Sinatra*, Charles Granata sparsely describes the content of the album as "a group of patriotic songs featuring Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians, and guest vocalist Bing Crosby" (174), while in *All or Nothing at All: A Life of Frank Sinatra*, his very recommendable biography of Ol' Blue Eyes, Donald Clarke dismisses the LP as "a mish-mash of Christmas songs, patriotic songs . . . and two tracks with guest Bing Crosby" (222). Stephen Thomas Erlewine, in a very short review published in the *Allmusic* website, considers *America* "a minor entry in Frank Sinatra's catalog" and goes on to say that "although the sentiment is respectable, the album isn't engaging, suffering from hackneyed arrangements and dull songs." Books about Crosby have tended to overlook this record in a similar fashion, although this will perhaps be corrected when the long-awaited second volume of Gary Giddins's biography of Bing finally sees the light of day. For now, we must be content to speculate that this lack of success and critical attention may well have to do with the fact that the album was very much a product of its time, and therefore, it is mostly seen today—when considered at all—as a historical artifact and a project of almost no relevance in the careers of Bing and Frank. Let us look, then, into the specific context that favored the appearance of such a record

After creating a slew of classic concept albums and a few successful singles for Capitol in the 1950s with the likes of arrangers Nelson Riddle, Billy May, and Gordon Jenkins, Sinatra began toying with the idea of starting his own label so as to gain more economic and artistic control of his career. His ambition took shape in 1960 when he formed Reprise Records, to which he soon signed many of his performer friends, including Duke Ellington, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Jr., Jo Stafford, Rosemary Clooney, and many others. This gave Sinatra the opportunity to spend time working on projects that had some personal significance to him, such as the series of records issued in 1963 as the *Reprise Musical Repertory Theater*, which comprised versions of tunes from popular stage musicals like *Finian's Rainbow*, *South Pacific*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Kiss Me, Kate*, recorded by a cast that included Frank, Dino, Sammy, Dinah Shore, Jo Stafford, Rosemary Clooney, and Bing, among others. *America* is, obviously, closely linked to these albums, yet it is profoundly shaped by the assassination of President Kennedy on November 22, 1963. At this point in time, the shootings of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy lay in the future, but the United States were still trying to recover from the shock and grief of the assassination of JFK, and in these politically and socially convoluted times, feelings of patriotism were rekindled in Sinatra, who had once been very close to the late President. This is presumably how the idea for *America* came about, and Sinatra recruited Fred Waring and His Pennsylvanians and Chorus and Bing Crosby to collaborate with him on the project.


STEREO
AMERICA
I HEAR YOU
SINGING
FRANK SINATRA
BING CROSBY
FRED WARING
AND THE PENNSYLVANIANS
THE HOUSE I LIVE IN • THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND •
YOU NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD • STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER •
AMERICA, I HEAR YOU SINGING • AND OTHERS

In a letter to Walter Winchell, dated April 15, 1964, after the release of the album, Sinatra clearly sums up the objective of *America*:

> "We all know what's wrong with our country and our society. We talk about our faults a great deal, as we should. But I think we should talk and think

about what's *right* with our country. The songs in *America, I Hear You Singing* do just that. They sound the praises of our great nation—North, South, East, and West. They remind us of the good things in our society. This is what Bing and I had in mind when we decided to do this album with Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians. We hope that this is the "message" you will get from it, too."

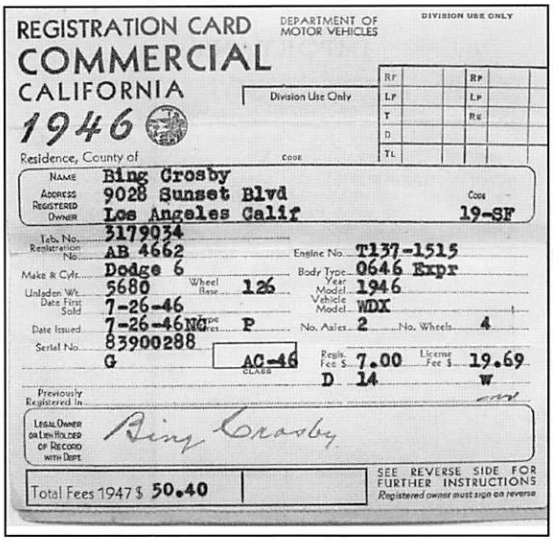
In order to convey that patriotic message, Sinatra, Crosby, and company selected twelve songs, some old and some new, and enlisted the aid of six different arrangers (Nelson Riddle, Roy Ringwald, Tom Scott, Dick Reynolds, Jack Halloran, and Harry Simeone), which perhaps accounts for the unevenness of the album. Had only one arranger been used—Riddle, for instance—the LP would probably have ended up with greater unity, but as it was, the finished product definitely has its high and its low spots. While some of the arrangements are excellent and suit the songs and the performers ("The House I Live In," "This Land Is Your Land," "A Home in the Meadow"), some others inevitably come across as pompous and overdone ("America, I Hear You Singing," "Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor").

Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians, who in the 1920s and '30s had been responsible for some very exciting, jazzy dance band records but who were past their creative prime by the '60s, are the backing band on all tracks and are responsible for four solo tunes, including the adaptation of John Philip Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever" that closes the set. Crosby sings three songs accompanied by Waring (Irving Berlin's "This Is a Great Country," Woody Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land," and Sammy Cahn and Robert Dolan's "A Home in the Meadow") and Sinatra also has three solo numbers. Then, Frank and Bing join forces for two duets (Cahn and Van Heusen's "You Never Had It So Good" and the Roy Ringwald-arranged "Let Us Break Bread Together") that find them interacting seamlessly and having some fun together in the process. Two of Bing's solo offerings rank among the highlights of the album—his swinging reading of Guthrie's "This Land Is Your Land," a song that was widely embraced as one of the anthems of the folk revival of the late '50s and early '60s, demonstrates his versatility and ease at adapting a folk song that is in theory far removed from his home turf, and "A Home in the Meadow," which uses the melody to "Greensleeves," is sung in an understated way that suits it perfectly. Sinatra's update of "The House I Live In," a song he had recorded in the 1940s for a movie short in favor of racial and religious tolerance, is yet another artistic triumph, showing that, despite its decided obscurity, *America* can also be enjoyed for purely musical reasons. Indeed, the review that appeared in *Variety* on May 9, 1964, upon the album's release, was rather encouraging:

> "This is an impressive gathering of top names for a patriotic paean in a swinging format. Backed by Fred Waring's orchestra and chorus, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra singly and in tandem deliver a fine collection of flag-wavers."

Yet the album would have to wait forty-six years to see its first reissue on CD, a very appealing release from Universal International with excellent sound, the original liner notes by producer Sonny Burke, and a few pictures from the recording sessions. At the time of this writing, though, the CD is inexplicably available in the U.S. as an import only, the back cover stating that Universal International's exclusive license applies to "the world excluding the United States and Canada." This is, perhaps, the ultimate example of the contradictory legal fate of an album that seems to be destined to remain a mere footnote in the impressive discographies of Crosby and Sinatra, but which deserves to be rediscovered by aficionados of both artists and held in higher esteem. If anything, it definitely offers a hint of the magic that Bing and Frank could have worked in the studio if only they had decided to collaborate on an album of dpuets of the caliber of *Fancy Meeting You Here* and *Bing & Satchmo*—but, alas, they never did!

Anton Garcia-Fernandez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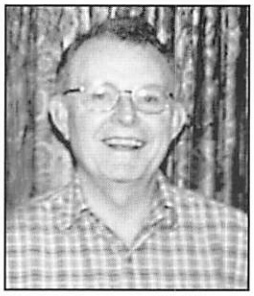
Celluloid Crosby



For this chapter of "Celluloid Crosby" Bing is going to take co-star billing with our most recently appointed honorary member. Centenarian Mary Carlisle has been ignored by Crosby chroniclers for far too long. Between 1933 and 1938 she was on the Paramount lot with Bing when he filmed three movies. Those films saw him consolidating his film career. In 1933 he was at the beginning of a new contract with Paramount Pictures which required him to appear in nine films over three years. The following year he broke into the list of top ten box office film stars and by 1937 he was fourth placed on that list. By the time he was supported on screen for the third time by Mary Carlisle his name on a cinema marquee was sufficient to sell tickets. You could say that Mary was on hand to witness Bing's rise from a comparatively unknown actor to Paramount Pictures most valuable contractee.

Before looking at the three Crosby-Carlisle films, I have to acknowledge a debt to Adam Swanson. His meeting with her as related in the last issue of BING offered a career profile on which to build. Here is a brief rundown of her first hundred years, concentrating mainly on her decade and a bit in the public eye:

1914 Born in Boston February 3rd. She was the stepdaughter of industrialist Henry J. Kaiser.

1928 Caught the attention of Carl Laemmle jnr. He arranged a screen test.

1930 First glimpsed in a bit part in the film *Madam Satan.*

1933 Named a WAMPAS baby star. There were thirteen nominated each year. They were Hollywood starlets deemed most likely to succeed by the Western Association of Motion Picture Advertisers. Started in 1922 they caught the public interest in the way that Oscar nominees did later in the nineteen twenties. Mary Carlisle is the only survivor from her year.

1933 Filmed *College Humor* with Bing.

1937 Made *Double or Nothing.*

1938 Co-starred in her final Crosby picture, *Doctor Rhythm.*

Mary has kindly signed this photograph to the ICC.

1939 Lived in London for a short lime.

1942 Married James Blakeley. He was the second male lead in the 1935 Crosby picture *Two for Tonight.* He later became an executive with 20th Century-Fox. He died in 2007.

1943 Made her final appearance in *Dead Men Walk.* It was a 67 minute B picture. One reviewer wrote, "Eerie when the low budget doesn't show through". Perhaps it was as good a time as any for Mary to quit the movie business.

1951 Took over the management of the Elizabeth Arden Beauty Salon in Hollywood.

Now for the three films she made with Bing.

College Humor. As the film's leading lady, Barbara Shirrel she plays the co-ed who romances Professor Frederick Danvers (Bing). These days that sort of relationship would result in a few newspaper columns especially if the story is accompanied by a photograph of M.C. She was a stunner, as evidenced by the picture in the last issue of this magazine. No wonder Bing said in his Musical Autobiography when writing about the film: "I never did know what the story was all about. Mary Carlisle sat in all my classes and I guess that sort of threw me off". Leonard Maltin, in his "Classic Movie Guide", neatly summarises the 80 minute effort with: "Hokey, entertaining rah-rah musical with Bing a professor!" It's hard to disagree.

Double of Nothing. When the film gets underway the significance of its title becomes apparent. The will of the uncle of Mary Carlisle, who plays Vicki Clark, gives an opportunity for anyone finding a planted wallet to receive $5,000. If the money is doubled then the uncle's estate goes to them. That serves to provide a plot opportunity for wallet finder 'Lefty' Boylan (Bing) to romance Vicki. The Depression was not long over so a happy ending was obligatory. By now Mary was being recognised for her looks as much as (or more than) her acting. The film received untypical criticism from the *Los Angeles Examiner.* L.A. was a movie town and the local press needed the goodwill - and advertising revenue - of the film studios. *Double or Nothing* the film took a drubbing from the paper. Mary Carlisle, the leading lady, received praise. "Coherency is oddly lacking. It's a musical hodge-podge, due chiefly to the sketchy story material. Mary Carlisle grows more beautiful with each picture and she's becoming a top notch little actress." That newspaper review was written for the rnoviegoing public. Variety's role was to alert the film industry and influence exhibitors. Their view - "Due for big openings and tapering-off business. Will squeeze through". Paramount was unconcerned. The film went on release in September of 1937 and Bing and Mary were back together in November of that year *to* begin filming...

Doctor Rhythm. In this one Mary Carlisle plays Judy Marlowe. She is the niece and heiress of Lorelei Dodge-Blodgett, played by Beatrice Lillie. Bing is Doctor Bill Remsen. The film's eighty minute running time results in Bing and Mary living happily ever after. The happy ending could have arrived ten minutes earlier if the audience were not compelled to watch Beatrice Lillie's double dozen double damask dinner napkins routine. By now Miss Carlisle's admirer on the *L.A. Examiner* was determined to promote her whatever the movie. He wrote: "Highly agreeable is ... the presence in the picture of Mary Carlisle who combines demureness and vivacity in capital fashion in the role of Crosby's leading lady."

Unfortunately the Examiner's film critic was not her agent. Otherwise things may have developed differently. At least she was entitled to be cast in some decent pictures. Nothing which followed *Doctor Rhythm* built on her acting achievements to date. The four films in which she appeared in the year following the release of *Doctor Rhythm* were *Tip-off Girls,* (top billed in this one hour B picture), *Hunted Men, Touchdown Army* and *Illegal Traffic* (second in the cast list behind J. Carrol Naish in one of Paramount's G-men series). The titles say it all.

Mary and Bing get playful in Double or Nothing.

It is better to fast forward to Mary's last film than to linger over the half dozen which followed. As mentioned earlier it was called *Dead Men Walk.* Lovers of horror films of this period will be hard pressed to write off anything featuring George Zucco and Dwight Frye but it was a typical B picture. Fortunately Mary was saved from further menace when she was rescued from the movie business by marriage to James Blakely.

Looking back on the career of Mary Carlisle, it is difficult to understand why she was not nurtured by Paramount. She played light comedy well. Her looks were made for the fan magazines which proliferated in the 1930s when she was making three to four films a year. The answer probably lies in casting. Of all the leading men she played against not one created the Crosby-Carlisle chemistry which makes her trio of pictures with Bing memorable eighty years on.

Happy 101st. Mary.

Keith Parkinson k.parkinson1941@btinternet.com

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters and emails received since the last issue

Bob Grace, by email from Houston, Texas, USA

Thirty years ago, I was an entertainment writer for one of the major newspapers and did a few interviews with Bob Hope (as well as Dorothy Lamour and Kathryn Crosby). Bob was still doing his TV specials and making personal appearances around the country, so he would do interviews to promote the event. And so long as you mentioned the TV special or whatever in your story, he was willing to talk about anything. I loved to get him talking about his old movies — especially making the Road movies with Bing and Dorothy Lamour.

During one of the interviews he mentioned that people were telling him that *The Princess and the Pirate* was showing that week on one of the premium movie channels on cable. He said friends were coming up to him and saying, "Hey I'm going home to watch *The Princess and the Pirate* tonight." He was getting a big kick out of that — and I'm sure he'd be very pleased to know that people were still watching his movies.

Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour and Perry Como all talked about Bing. (Perry Como thought the world of Bing.) Even Ella Fitzgerald, when I asked her how she got started singing scat, mentioned Louis Armstrong and Bing as her influences. (People forget Bing was singing scat in songs like *Dinah* years before other jazz singers.)

Something else you might enjoy. Recently I was reading a new book on the history of baseball in Houston. (*Houston Baseball — The Early Years 1861-1961*, Edited by Mike Vance, Bright Sky Press, 2014) Houston in those early years was the home of the Houston Buffs (short for Buffaloes), a St. Louis Cardinal farm club, and a member of the Texas League. The book covers all the colorful aspects of baseball during those early years, so I was pleasantly surprised to read the following passage:

In the late 1940s the league initiated a contest to select "The Texas League Golden Girl." Each club had the opportunity to pick their own nominee. One evening a number of lovely young women came to the ballpark dressed in swimsuits and individual players were asked to walk each contestant to home plate where they would be introduced to the crowd. One Buff, local hero and father of 12, Larry Miggins, was asked to escort Miss Kathy Grandstaff to home plate. He took one look at the young lady and politely declined, saying "Why she's practically naked." So a teammate, Al Papai volunteered to take his place. Miss Grandstaff won the Buff contest, and, as the winner traveled on to Los Angeles to represent the team for the league title. It turns out that Grandstaff became a very big winner: first she won the "Texas League Golden Girl" title and decided to stay in California and become a model. Then she changed her name to Kathy Grant, met and married singer Bing Crosby and became a movie star in her own right. As Al Papai liked to tell his teammates, "Remember guys, I made her what she is today."

That wasn't the only local beauty contest Kathryn Crosby won. The annual Houston Rodeo (at that time billed as the Houston Fat Stock Show and Rodeo) also had a beauty contest. Years later, I heard Kathryn tell the story, saying "All 98 pounds of me was named Miss Houston Fat Stock." (You'll be happy to know that the contest has since been renamed the Miss Go Texan contest.)

Ted Laker, Southsea, Hampshire, UK

Thought you may like to know that *Angel Radio* continues to feature much Bing Crosby material, apart from Jim Reilly with his continuing detailed shows, there's Bing's radio shows regularly scheduled on Tuesday mornings around 9:30. I've also been privileged to compile programmes dealing with the Crosby career. I don't suppose any other radio station features anywhere near so much Bing material.

He's also a big name on request shows. It would be great if a message from the Crosby family could be sent to Tony Smith – founder and driving force of the radio station, as he deserves much praise not only for the Bing broadcasts – but also keeping many other names from past entertainment alive.

Jason Liddiard, writing on the *Crosby Fan World* site in August.

I am a member of the Sons of the Desert, the international fan club of Laurel & Hardy. At last night's monthly meeting of our local Sons we screened *Hollywood Handicap*, a 1938 short film directed by Buster Keaton. The film is set in the Santa Anita racecourse and we see some well-known faces enjoying a day at the races, including Oliver Hardy, Al Jolson and....Bing!

I was not aware of this short and, although I guess it ranks as one of Bing's many cameo appearances, I cannot find it listed in the A-Z of Bing's Movies nor on Stephen Lewis's Internet Museum. It is, however, well-documented on the Internet Movie Database (IMDB). *(Editor: Thanks, Jace. The film has now been added to the A-Z of Bing's movies on the BING magazine web site).*

Jon Reichman, by email from Chappaqua, New York, USA

I have been enjoying my new membership in The International Club Crosby.

For your information, earlier this month I attended a seminar in New York City hosted by Gary Giddins on the subject of collecting music. After it was over, I went up to him and asked when volume 2 of his Crosby biography was coming out. He said it'll be a while; it's coming along slowly, but it'll happen. So it sounds like there's no firm publication date on the horizon.

Michael O'Donoghue, by email from Romford, Essex, UK

Congratulations on the summer issue of BING. I thought it was about the best of your many fine editions.

I was trying to find something interesting to view on the TV last week without any success, I have a store of DVDs stored beneath my TV so I began to search through them in the hope of uncovering one that would entertain me. I discovered my collection of the Road films.

As I studied the one featuring *Road to Zanzibar* I recalled my first viewing of that particular film.

It must have been about 1942-43 and it was to be shown at a small cinema in Holloway Road, North London for one day only…on a Sunday. This particular cinema did not show the latest movies just re-runs of films a few years old and that would be on Monday to Weds then a different one on Thurs to Saturday and then two showings only of whatever happened to be on Sundays.

I had just returned from evacuation and had seen *Road to Morocco* and was now very keen to catch this earlier Road film. The trouble was it was being screened at this very small cinema and I anticipated that there would be a large queue to see Bing & Bob and the luscious Lamour because believe me when I say wartime London was a grey, dull place especially on a Sunday afternoon, no TV in those days and the radio was nothing like today's, routine, boring and tedious.

I made sure to take my place early in the queue that Sunday afternoon but I was aghast when I caught sight of the throng already waiting outside. I had not seen so many people outside the Empire before …and never again.

When the lights went down I breathed a sigh of belief.

Seeing the film now I was immediately struck by Bing's exuberant rendering of 'You Lucky People, You' in the opening shot and the empathy of the two stars displaying a spontaneity that must have been just what the jaded folk of England needed. Even now, seventy years on, I was chuckling at their wisecracks.

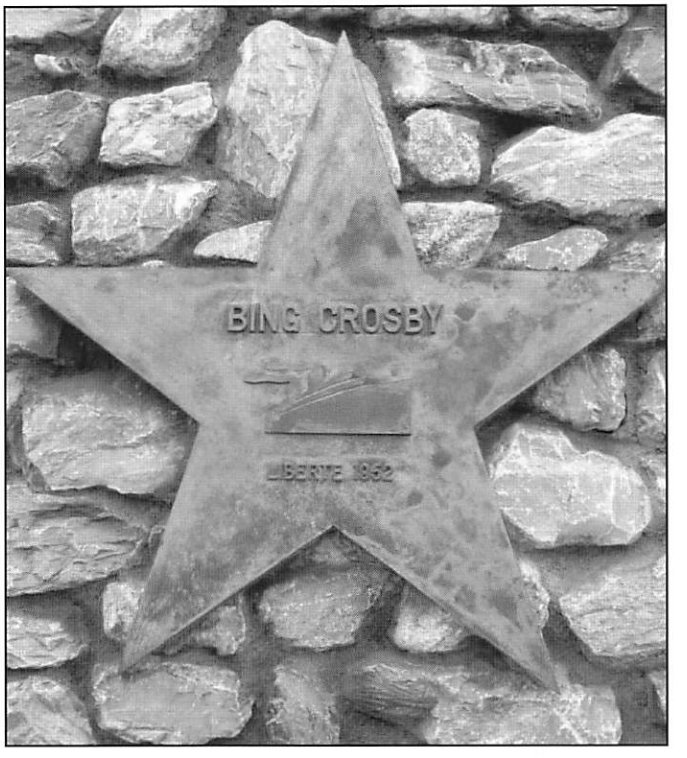
A final note. For the one and only time that particular cinema that afternoon was cleared at the end of the film to allow the crowd outside to come in to enjoy the comedy.

Rod Owen, by email from Plymouth, UK.

You will know that I live in the south-west close to Plymouth. The city retains its strong links to the sea and all things nautical! Years ago cruise ships would dock here and many a celebrity would disembark - often taking the train to London. Several internationally renowned 'stars' have plaques dedicated to them - the date that they docked and the name of the vessel that transported them.

This area of Plymouth is undergoing considerable redevelopment and is also a part of the South-West Coastal Path. In recent years these 'star' plaques have been located close to where the docks are.

Some may have arrived directly from the USA others having first landed in France. I'm not sure which. Nat 'King' Cole, Judy Garland, Duke Ellington, Al Jolson, Boris Karloff and Bing have dedications to them. The plaque commemorates Bing's arrival in 1952 aboard The Liberte.



Can't add further detail about what he did next - tour, film or en route to Europe? I'm sure that Club members will be able to fill in the detail.

(Editor: Our thanks to Rod for sending this photo. It was September, 1952 and Bing was en route to Paris to film 'Little Boy Lost' but first he played in the famous golf match at Maidenhead with Bob Hope, Ted Ray and Donald Peers.)

Roger Schore, by email to Greg Van Beek from New York, USA

I just purchased the new Christmas CD "Holiday for Swing" by Seth MacFarlane. I think he's a wonderful singer with a terrific voice; he can swing convincingly

with a big band and deliver a ballad with authority and sensitivity. His arranger Joel McNeely is equally gifted. Looking over the selections, when I saw three with Crosby connections "Mele Kalikimaka", "Little Jack Frost, Get Lost," sung as a duet with Norah Jones and perhaps most notably "Snow" from *White Christmas*, not to mention the whistling MacFarlane throws in to an additional three selections, I was certain that Bing would receive an appreciative nod in MacFarlane's notes. Not a chance! Bing is completely overlooked. Sinatra is represented with "Christmas Dreaming" and is saluted deservedly for bringing his orchestrators' contributions, e.g. Riddle, May and Jenkins to the public's attention, but Bing doesn't get mentioned at all. Presumably, MacFarlane is aware of him and his importance to Christmas music and in particular, this recording. As they say, what gives?
(Note from Greg Van Beek: I, too, picked up Seth's new Christmas album and was surprised to see the songs so closely associated with Bing. Of course, his previous non-Christmas release also featured some more tunes from the Bing canon, including "It's Anybody's Spring", "You and I", etc. It's apparent Seth is a Crosby fan, and I agree it's a pity he didn't acknowledge him in the liner notes as such. Otherwise, it's a fine album, and worth giving a listen to.)

Bert Bishop, Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex, UK

I would like to thank you, Michael and all those who contributed to yet another enjoyable gathering at Leeds. Each year it seems to get better and better. Indeed, my companion for the evening, my niece Elaine, who is not a dedicated Bing fan but thoroughly enjoyed the event, remarked how professional the PowerPoint presentation was. The speakers, particularly, Ken Barnes, were interesting and enjoyably anecdotal. It's sad that our numbers diminish year by year. I'm sure that next year's 'grand finale' will attract a larger audience than this year as we would like to go out on a high. There will be tears!

Graham Pascoe, by email from Bathurst, NSW, Australia

The summer issue of BING reminded me that many things which we are able to enjoy only became available because of the persistence (and financial commitment) of dedicated pioneers. The fascinating article by Bob Phillips 'Bing Crosby and the recording revolution' was so informative that I had to read it more than once. It's another example of the splendid content of your fine magazine. John Newton's story of his acquisition of rare and unexpected broadcast recordings is, as you wrote, astonishing and it was good of John to share that with us.

When I read my copies of BING I look for a possible Australian connection and, as usual, I've found a couple this time. I always enjoy Martin McQuade's contributions and his quotations of television director James Shelton's recollections of THE BING CROSBY SHOW inspired me to go to my files. THE BING CROSBY SHOW was publicised in Australia's TV WEEK magazine in July 1964 with a photo of Bing casually dressed with a golf club over his shoulder and Bing's statement of why he'd decided to do a weekly sitcom: 'I'm an actor. I get a great deal of satisfaction out of working. I like the idea of a challenge.' He also professed to feel an obligation to the people who worked for his production company with 'a sense of responsibility to every man who works for me, just as they have towards me'. By this time Australians had seen Bing on various TV specials and as a guest on others' shows but the prospect of a weekly Crosby show was big news and in August the Sydney newspaper THE SUN-HERALD ran a half-page article on the forthcoming show. Just in case its readers hadn't got the message, TV WEEK gave it another plug and claimed that the budget for each edition of the show was reported to be $70,000. THE BING CROSBY SHOW was televised in Australia each week at prime time each Friday evening from mid-October 1964. It had a favourable review in THE SUN-HERALD as 'a good safe vehicle, pleasant and innocuous...as far as family comedies go it is head and shoulders better than a great many'. The network repeated the series on weekday afternoons from the end of May 1966.

Brian Willey's account of his dealings with Bing were illuminating. His wonderful BBC Radio production, THE BING CROSBY STORY, was broadcast nationwide by the Australian Broadcasting Commission in 1977, 1979 and 1986. In Melbourne, a commercial radio station broadcast Gord Atkinson's THE CROSBY YEARS in 1977 and 1995.

There's no doubt that Bing Crosby was a major force in Australian entertainment and still has enthusiastic fans, witnessed by the continuance of The Australian Bing Crosby Society.

V-disc update

David Currington also emailed me about the last magazine and went on to reveal some amazing research which we now share with you.

Thank you Malcolm and congratulations to the contributors for an excellent magazine.

I went straight to the article covering the background and detail of the first Kraft broadcast discs. Greg did so well in getting onto this source and John is indeed to be applauded for negotiating the purchase. Of course it would be tremendous if John shared these "new" songs with us, but for now it is very satisfying to know that they are in safe hands.

John continues to salvage Bing rarities and he seems to have become a regular contributor with his articles in BING. I very much enjoy hearing his stories

which are revealing and riveting.

I should long ago have awarded plaudits to Keith Parkinson. For decades I have benefited from his articles and gained so much knowledge and enjoyment through him. Thank you Keith.

I particularly relished his article on Bing's V-Discs. This has been an aspect of Bing's recording career that has engrossed me for some time. The discographies detailing these discs were tantalising and over time I obtained taped copies of quite a few. Of course that "official" CD set which Keith speaks of threw a real spanner into the works of collecting, but it resulted in some excellent corrective articles appearing in BING.

All of the discs that Keith refers to – in fact ALL of Bing's known V-Discs – can be found on the YouTube "V-discdaddy" site along with hundreds by other artists. The fellow who has established this site has done a brilliant job. There is excellent historical background and listings with the label of every featured disc being shown.

With tape and internet-provided copies of not only Bing's V-Discs but his various other AFRS and radio outings we now have the luxury of "on-hand" material as a much easier and reliable means of correctly identifying source material – or at least of dismissing suggested sources as being incorrect. I only wish that the great Bing catalogue keepers of Lionel Pairpoint, John Bassett, Bob Roberts, Ralph Harding, Wayne Martin, Larry Kiner and Derek Parkes could be enjoying the essence of our current internet age.

Anyway, Keith's article has prompted me to table my findings revealed by a close study of all of Bing's V-Discs and comparisons of the stated sources for the tracks. I offer the following corrections with identifiers. The listing extracts have been lifted from Wayne Martin's update to the Bing V-Discography with the previously accepted source preceding the V-Disc number.

A TOAST TO IRVING BERLIN [ALL BY MYSELF (Berlin) - **ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND** (Berlin) - **EASTER PARADE** (Berlin)] (Films: Blue Skies, Holiday Inn). Al Jolson, J.S.T. Intro. by Bing and Al. (From 7 May 47 Philco Radio Time transcribed 31 March 47). J452-D7TC7495. **V-Disc 814-A (Army).**

Correction: *Bob Roberts "The Road to Bing Crosby (The V-Disc Supplement)" reveals that this is in fact a rehearsal from Philco of 7 May 47.*

Identification: *ALL BY MYSELF is the broadcast version but there are differences in the other two which can be identified by the absence from the V-Disc of comments made by Bing which appear in the broadcast. At approximately 1 min. 40 sec. Bing's "Here now, steady" is missing from introduction to ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND as is his "And you look proud" at approximately 5 min. following Jolson's line "I'd be the proudest fella" in EASTER PARADE.*

DEAR OLD GIRL (Morse-Buck). Charioteers, James Sherman, piano. Introd. by **Bob Burns and Bing. (Source unknown) - THESE FOOLISH THINGS (REMIND ME OF YOU)** (Strachey - Marvell). Charioteers, Henderson Choir, J.S.T. (From 7 February 46 Kraft Music Hall). JDB51-XP35870. **V-Disc 632-A (Army).**

Correction: *DEAR OLD GIRL, including Bing's spoken introduction, is identical to CP 169 and evidently sourced there or they share the same source. THESE FOOLISH THINGS broadcast on Kraft Music Hall of 7 February 46, the only Kraft appearance, differs from this V-Disc version. (The V-Disc and GI Journal 94 versions are identical and share the same source.)*

Identification: *Early in the song, at about 20 sec., the lyric is "my heart has wings". In the broadcast version "wings" is struck quickly and strongly whereas in the V-Disc it is a weak, fading note.*

IN THE LAND OF BEGINNING AGAIN (Meyer-Clarke) (Film: The Bells of St. Mary's). Henderson Choir, J.S.T. Intro. by Bing. (From 14 February 46 Kraft Music Hall rehearsal). - **LET IT SNOW! LET IT SNOW! LET IT SNOW!** (Styne-Cahn). J.S.T. (Probably from 14 February 46 Kraft Music Hall). JDB76-D6TC5170. **V-Disc 646-A (Army).**

Correction: *Source for LET IT SNOW is not as stated. This V-Disc version is different from this and also the 28 February 46 Kraft Music Hall broadcast, the only other Kraft version. It is either a rehearsal for the 14 February 46 or the 28 February 46 show, and probably the latter which it more closely resembles as 14 February 46 version has only piano-run introduction.*

Identification: *A variation at about the 12 sec. mark is where on the broadcast version of 14 February 46 Bing sings "but the fire is so delightful" whereas the V-Disc lyric is "but by the fire's delightful". The lyrics continue on V-Disc as "since we've got no place to go" whereas on the only other Kraft outing of 28 February 46 they are "we've got no place to go", thus eliminating both shows as the V-Disc source.*

WAR DEPARTMENT · MUSIC SECTION · ATHLETIC & RECREATION BRANCH · SPECIAL SERVICE DIVISION · A.S.F.
No. 2A
ARMY HIT KIT TUNES
IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SO
(From "Porgy and Bess")
Dinah Shore & Bing Crosby, with Orchestra
Vocal
Voice
OUTSIDE START

IT AIN'T NECESSARILY SO (G. and I. Gershwin). Dinah Shore, Gordon Jenkins O. (Said to be from August 1943 Dinah Shore Program). D3MC-145. **V-Disc 2-A (Army).**

Note: *Lionel Pairpoint has suggested that this V-Disc version and that on Command Performance 54 of 24 February 43 are different. They are in fact identical, sharing the same source.*

IT CAN'T BE WRONG (Gannon-Steiner). J.S.T. (From 24 June 43 Kraft Music Hall). VP117-ND3MC-3347. V-Disc 28-B (Army).

Correction: Command Performance 71 of 19 June 43 is identical to this and is either the source or shares the source of this V-Disc version. The only time this is sung on Kraft Music Hall is 24 June 43 and it could be that the rehearsal for this show is the source.

Identification: *At approximately 10 sec. the lyric runs "would it be wrong to kiss". In the Kraft Music Hall broadcast of 24 June 43 Bing sings "kiss" as a short, abrupt note whereas on the V-Disc the note is held for an extended time.*

KENTUCKY BABE (Buck-Geibel). Charioteers, James Sherman, piano, J.S.T. (From 26 August 43 Kraft Music Hall). VP390-D3MC463. **V-Disc 128-B (Army). - WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE INFANTRY?** (Loesser). Chorus, J.S.T. (From 5 August 43 Kraft Music Hall rehearsal). VP390-D3MC463. **V-Disc 128-B (Army).**

Note: The version, and therefore the source, of WHAT DO YOU DO IN THE INFANTRY is identical to that for GI Journal 11 of 24 September 43.

ONE ALONE (Harbach-Hammerstein II-Romberg). Trudy Erwin, Orch. (From 22 November 43 AFRS rec. session) - **POINCIANA (SONG OF THE TREE)** (Simon-Bernier). Orch. (From 22 November 43 AFRS rec. session). VP1402-D5TC518. **V-Disc 263-A (Navy); 503-A (Army).**

Correction: Source for POINCIANA is not as stated. Bert Bishop and John Bassett's "Bing – Just For the Record" reveals that it is from 1 October 43 Decca master L 3202-B)

"PENNIES FROM HEAVEN" MEDLEY (Film: Pennies from Heaven). Ken Lane Singers, Chorus, Charioteers, James Sherman, piano, J.S.T. Intro. by Bing. (From 16 November 44 Kraft Music Hall). **[ONE, TWO, BUTTON YOUR SHOE** (Johnston-Burke)**; SO DO I** (Johnston-Burke)**; PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** (Johnston-Burke) **SKELETON IN THE CLOSET** (Johnston-Burke)**].** VP1035-D4TC-519. VP1036-D4TC520. VP1677-D5TC1505**. V-Disc 598-A (Army).** First Part of **V-Disc 598-B (Army).**

Correction: Source is not as stated and appears to be a rehearsal for Kraft Music Hall of 16 November 44.

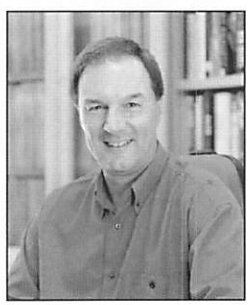
Identification: *In the 16 November 44 Kraft Music Hall broadcast version of ONE TWO BUTTON YOUR SHOE, at approximately 1 min. 20 sec. just before the entrance of The Charioteers, Bings sings "tell me you get a thrill" whereas the V-Disc line is "tell me you get SUCH a thrill".*

I saw an article (was it in BING?) last year that hundreds of V-Discs had been found hidden under a university gymnasium in the U.S. I wonder if one day some previously unknown Bing V-Discs might be revealed and circulated from this or some other mystery source. To be a collector is to live in hope.

David Currington dcurro@comcen.com.au

CROSBYANA

Ken Crossland takes a look at all things Bing



Ken Crossland takes a look at all things Bing.

The approach of October 14 each year inevitably causes all of us to think back to the sad day in 1977 when Bing passed away. For me, it always takes me back not just to that fateful day but to a week that contained the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. October 8, 1977 marked the final night of Bing's two-week engagement at the London Palladium and through a combination of great good fortune and considerable largesse on the part of former ICC secretary, the ever-genial Frank Murphy, it was a night when I fulfilled my ambition to meet Bing. The place was his Palladium dressing room, just a few minutes before he was due on stage. The encounter was short but indelibly memorable. One of us - there were four in the party who were granted the audience although now the only other one I can remember was Frank - asked Bing if he was heading straight home now that the run had ended. No, Bing explained, he was going to Brighton on Monday and then to Spain to "play a little golf." The rest, sadly, is history.

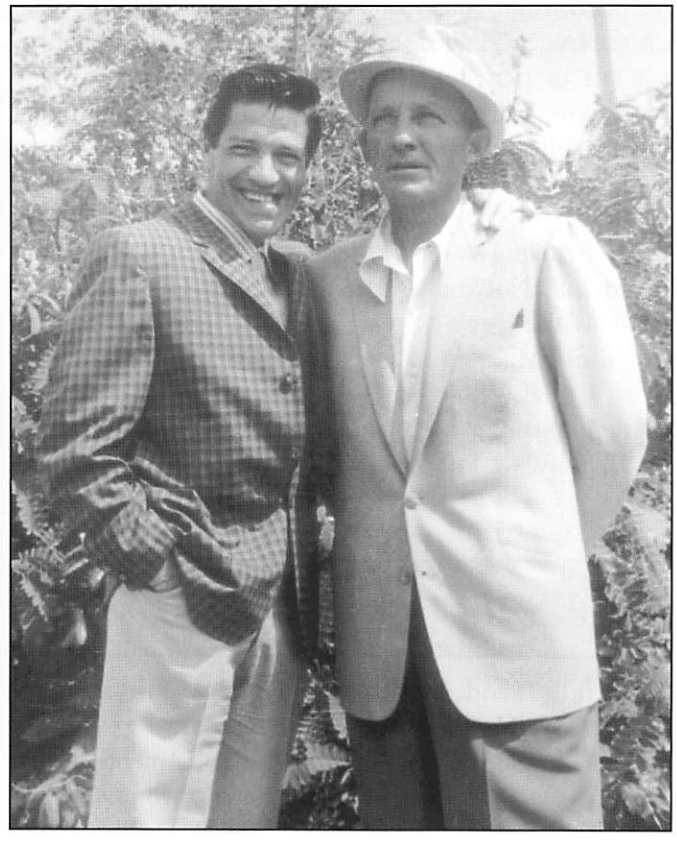
But this year, when October 14 dawned, I found myself thinking of an anniversary that was due to fall the day after. A friend of mine had just joined the exclusive Coombe Hill Golf Club in Surrey, on the outskirts of London, and I had been invited to play there on the 14th but my thoughts were immediately engulfed by another avid fan's encounter with Bing that took place there on October 15. The year in question was 1960. The day before, Bing had arrived in London from Rome and his picture appeared in several of the Saturday morning papers. One of them caught the eye of Michael Holliday, "Britain's Bing Crosby", a star in his own right by virtue

of his uncanny vocal resemblance to Bing, but above all else, a Crosby fan to whom Bing was nothing less than a god. Holliday was soon on the phone to the top London hotels, using his star status to glean from several telephonists, confirmation - or not - that Bing was in residence. When he called the Savoy, he struck gold and soon, he was talking to his hero, a conversation partially recorded on Mike's reel-to-reel tape recorder. When Bing casually mentioned that he was "doing some recording" later that morning, Mike almost jumped down the phone line. Bing was vague - probably quite genuinely - about where and when, but when the conversation finished, Holliday was straight onto his contacts in the music press to discover that the session was planned for later that morning at the Decca Studios in West Hampstead. "But," Holliday's informant, the Daily Mirror journalist, Patrick Doncaster, had said, "They might not let you in, you know, since you record for Columbia." Decca and EMI's Columbia labels were the head to head protagonists in the UK pop music scene and the Doncaster warning was a portent of what would become one of the great missed opportunities in popular music.

Bing at work in the West Hampstead studio on October 15, 1960.

Over the course of recent weeks, I have paid several visits to the home of Geoff Milne, the renowned collector and Crosby enthusiast, now in his 90th year. Geoff once had the dream job, working for UK Decca and overseeing the British releases of Bing's American Decca catalogue and later, producing Bing's "Feels Good, Feels Right" album in London. He was there that day in October 1960 and remembers it well. The news that Bing was going to work at West Hampstead however came as much of a surprise to him as it did to Michael Holliday and it was only a last-minute call from another Decca colleague that caused him to head out to the studio. When he got there, Bing was already at work and Holliday was sitting in the control booth, having charmed his way into the building. Geoff sat down next to him and the two watched the master at work. It was a laboured and ultimately fruitless session with none of the recordings that Bing made that day making it on the final cut of the planned "Holiday in Europe" album.

As the session drew to a close, an idea came into Geoff's head. How about an impromptu duet between Mike with Bing. He asked Holliday if he was game. "His eyes lit up," Geoff recalled and he put the idea to Dick Rowe, Decca's chief A&R man (infamous in history for turning down a demo tape of the Beatles before they signed with EMI). "No chance," was Rowe's reply, explaining to Geoff that World War III would break out if the news ever got out that he had recorded a Columbia artist in the Decca studios. "He shouldn't even be in here," he added, much as Doncaster had foretold. And as that moment passed, the chance of a Bing Crosby-Michael Holliday duet was lost forever.



Michael Holliday with his idol at Coombe Hill.

Bing finally got around to finishing the "Holiday in Europe" album in May 1961 and it remains to this day, a curious beast. It was Bing's last set of new recordings issued on the Decca label in the US, although as with his other work at that time, the recordings were owned by Bing's Project Records and leased to Decca. As such, I imagine that the master tapes lie in the infamous Crosby basement and it surprises me, at least, that they have not

been given a higher priority in the BCE re-issue program. It was a true 'concept' album, with a far more modern sound to it than anything he had done for before, save perhaps the "Bregman Swings" album, and it had an interesting mixture of songs, some familiar, some not. It was particularly nice that Bing got around to recording "C'est Si Bon", a song that somehow got missed for Bing's 1953 Paris-based "Le Bing" album. Crosby discographers have faithfully relayed that Bing's vocals were overdubbed to orchestral tracks laid down by Malcolm Lockyer, the British conductor who had overseen the October 1960 session. The original intent, it seems, had been for the album to be recorded in Europe, but where and when is unclear. The session in London in October appeared to be a one-off and certainly not part of a planned suite of recordings to deliver a full album, so quite why the original concept changed remains a mystery, one that it would be nice to see resolved. Perhaps it was just down to Bing's priorities. "Recording sessions always had to fit in with Bing's golf plans," Geoff Milne recalls, "not the other way round."

Meanwhile, back to Coombe Hill. When Bing had left the Decca Studios, he told Michael Holliday that he was off to play golf there as a guest of the British impresario, Val Parnell. Holliday dashed to his home in Surrey, collected his wife Margie who was also a Bing devotee and the two of them met Bing again later in the day at the golf club. Val Parnell was the man behind the iconic British TV show "Sunday Night at the London Palladium". Not knowing that Holliday had appeared on the show the previous year, Bing said to Parnell that he should put Mike on the show. "No, no" said Mike - he knew Parnell well - "you should put him on the show," pointing to Bing. "Me?" said Bing. "Naw, I'm through."

Happily, we know he wasn't.

Ken Crossland

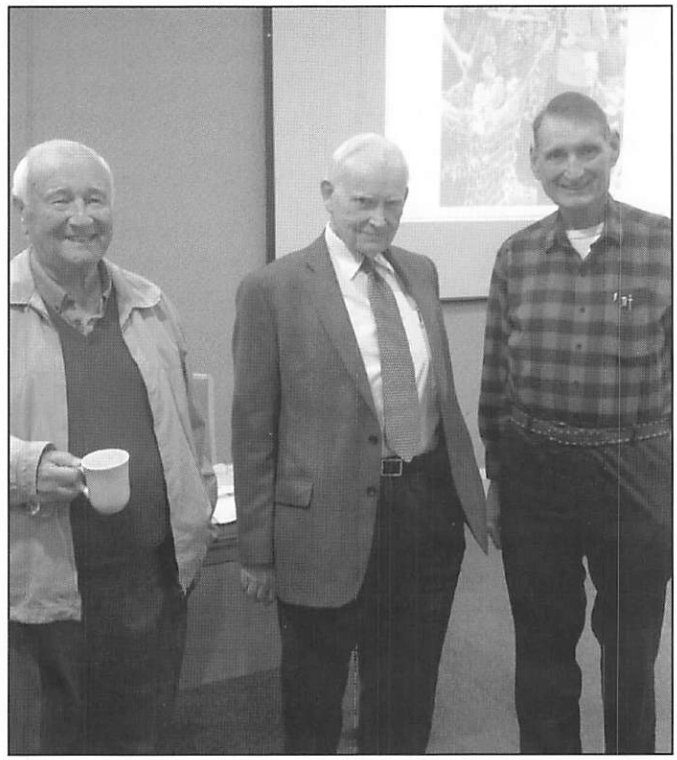
LEEDS 2014

Bob Halls send his report on the 49th Annual Dinner/Meeting on Sunday 5th October.

Greetings to all ICC members and recipients of the BING magazine as yet another annual meeting/dinner report flows from my hastily written notes, after trying to keep up with various contributors to the event.

This, the 49th meeting, met all the high standards set in past get-togethers and despite declining numbers, we enjoyed some first class presentations, as well as another really fulfilling dinner. Michael Crampton opened the proceedings as usual and reminded us that this was the 11th meeting at Weetwood Hall, following 28 at the Mansion House in Roundhay Park.

Our guest speakers, Ken Barnes, Perry Huntoon and Bob Phillips were warmly welcomed and those travelling from the USA were given a special welcome, including Bob, Perry and Ron and Anita Field. Apologies were received from Trevor and Pat Wagstaff, Jeremy Rose, George O'Reilly and Richard and Ann Baker. All hope to be with us next year.



Our speakers, (l to r) Ken Barnes, Bob Phillips and Perry Huntoon.

Michael expressed his thanks to Malcolm Macfarlane for his continuing hard work and dedication in respect of his presentations for this annual event and in his words, 'The best fan magazine in the world.' All present heartily agreed. He also asked for a vote of thanks for the rest of the team involved in keeping the International Club Crosby operating, both at home and abroad and in particular Greg Van Beek, F.B. (Wig) Wiggins and David Currington.

Michael also reported that, he had visited Leslie Gaylor's daughter Paulette on the Isle of Wight recently and taken possession of a selection of the late Leslie's Crosby collection. It's been some 14 years since Leslie died, but as Michael said, he was largely responsible for promoting Bing's memory in the UK, Bing befriending him over the years, whilst Leslie badgered and wrote incessantly to programme presenters and producers in an effort to keep his music and films in the public domain. Paulette needs space in the home now and a decision had to be made to break up Leslie's beloved collection. But on the positive side, some of us were able to take ownership of some important items, which were auctioned off during the meeting, which also means that they will remain with ICC members. More about that later.

Before handing over to Malcolm, Michael advised

us that the final, **yes the final meeting/dinner of the ICC in Leeds** would be held **on SUNDAY 5th OCTOBER 2015** at the same venue. It is envisaged that we will do something special for that event, including a CD and DVD, compiled by Malcolm, of a selection of favourite Bing songs and movie clips, all attendees receiving a copy of each. **Michael asked all those attending to submit their own personal favourites as soon as possible, so Malcolm can get the project up and running.**

Obviously this is both something to look forward to, yet an incredibly sad occasion after 50 meetings over the years and as such we may have a large attendance, so Michael will need to know potential numbers much earlier. My feelings on next year's event will feature later in this report,

Oh and he also gave me a vote of thanks for reporting on the meeting. He's such a nice man!

Malcolm's Miscellany

This is always the worrying time for me! Malcolm gives me a nice concise list of about 10 headings, then launches into a mass of information and overheads, mentioning names everyone has heard of except me and my pen almost goes into spontaneous combustion, whilst my head becomes a muddled fuddle....is that a real term! It'll do!

Message from Bing - December 1976

I love these messages from yesteryear! It's as if Bing is alive again and talking straight to us.

This message was a taped affair to previous BING editor John Bassett, Christmas 1976, the year before Bing's death and recorded by him after a long day of chat shows in New York and nightly performances at the Uris Theatre. Bing had received a request for a taped message for the UK fans and he found time to get into a corner and record the following message, finishing it off for his secretary to type up, 'sign it and send it, airmail.' Which is quite interesting when some would argue that Bing always personally signed his letters. It makes you wonder how many owners of Bing correspondence actually have an authentic signature!

The message then, on tape, reads like a letter, commencing 'Dear John'. Bing sends greetings to members and goes on to describe that he was doing a series of charity concerts at the Uris Theatre, playing up to December 19th, for a charity run by Rise Stevens. He also described a charity dinner and ball after a concert at Avery Fisher Hall. He outlined a previous collaboration with Rosemary Clooney at the Aladdin Theatre in Las Vegas, called Bing Crosby & Friends, along the same lines as the London Palladium concerts, with comedian Ted Rogers again performing, along with Joe Bushkin's group. He also talked about the Duck Season, with a week's shooting in California with son Harry and his beloved labrador. He also listed future commitments, after Christmas including a 'big special' in Pasadena and further concerts for Santa Clara University and possibly others in Washington DC, Chicago and Milwaukee. However he had Christmas on his mind and was really anxious to have family time at home and 'get the tree decorated'.

He also pointed out that he had turned down several performances, citing the need to support the kids in school, seeing it as important that their education was not disrupted. He finished by thanking his fans and offering the 'best of the holiday season,' Then adding the 'sign it and send it' instruction, as previously mentioned.

From my perspective, I just love the way the words just flowed from Bing when he was delivering a message like this. It's like he was talking to a group of mates. Perhaps he was!

Bing sings 'White Christmas' for German TV

This was an interesting little addition from Malcolm, a clip from December 1976 of Bing singing 'White Christmas' with a backing from Joe Bushkin, which prompted Malcolm to venture 'I'm not sure what tune Joe was playing here, maybe he had a drink or two.' Anyway, Bing kept a straight face throughout and one can only surmise that it was a genuine arrangement. Sounded a bit iffy to me!

Pasadena Show – March 1977 – with Paul Anka

This was a clip from the 50th Anniversary Gala with Bing singing 'Feels Good, Feels Right', followed by an appearance from Paul Anka and a duet with Bing of 'She's a Lady'.

Always looking for something a bit different to comment on, I couldn't help thinking how short Paul was, his head just reaching Bing's chest. Neither could I let one of Crosby's remarks slip by without comment, describing his own life as a 'Shiftless career of vagabondage'!

Also in this clip, Bing tells the story of walking down the street recently, when a guy came up to him and said 'Hey, didn't you used to be Bing Crosby?' Well, win a few, lose a few!

That Old Black Magic – Rejected from 'Feels Good, Feels Right'

Malcolm made reference to the 'Feels Good, Feels Right' album, which Bing had mentioned in his message, and he then played a track of 'That Old Black Magic' from the album which was rejected by Bing, who was not happy with the backing and arrangement. Malcolm had been contacted by Geoff Milne, who had an acetate from the original sessions with the rejected song on it. Geoff sent the track to Malcolm to be played at the meeting. Malcolm I think quite liked the arrangement, but I must say, as a very average musician myself, I agree with Bing. It sounded a little disjointed to me.

Photos, Leeds 2013

Malcolm then showed some photos from last year's meeting of attendees in various poses. Everyone, of course looked exceedingly young for their (our) age!

Ron and Anita Field

A very poignant moment then followed, when Malcolm asked Anita to relate a story about her husband Ron, who recently underwent a quadruple coronary bypass operation. Sometimes, words cannot really describe something like this, but I'll do my best.

It was the day after Thanksgiving last year and Ron was in a critical condition in hospital in Oregon. He underwent open heart surgery over a 16-hour period. All wasn't well and whilst in the ICU the surgeon became extremely concerned about his condition. His breathing was shallow and he 'flat lined' at least twice. The nurse said 'We need something to bring him out.' He had tubes down his throat and things looked grim. They said they must bring him round quickly. They talked to him, but he went down again, then Anita said to the nurse, 'He really likes Bing.' One of them then pulled out a mobile phone, pressed a few buttons and played Bing singing. Anita said you could hear a pin drop at that point. Suddenly she saw Ron's right hand come slowly up, almost directing a beat to the music which was playing and then realising he was spelling out the name of the band which was playing. The nurses got really excited and all said they wanted to stay in the room, saying 'everyone here is having a party.'

Ron survived and insisted on coming to the UK for the ICC meeting and Anita said 'I just wanted to pay a tribute to Bing.' This was a heart rending testimony, emotionally delivered by Anita in what I can only describe as one of those feel good moments, where you feel privileged to be present. Well done Anita and Ron and what a joy it was to have you with us and of course one of comments was, to the effect that Bing Crosby, even in death saved a life through his music. A wonderful story!

Anita Field was not really a Crosby fan but after the drama in the hospital she insists on wearing the "I Love Bing" badge.

Bing Sitcom – 'Night and Day'

Crosby's venture with his sitcom series was possibly not a members' favourite last year at the meeting, but Malcolm showed a clip from one episode, where Bing sits at the piano and sings a most lovely rendition of 'Night and Day', which was well received.

Joan Bakewell interviews Bing – June 1965

Bert Bishop mentioned he had seen a brief clip of this interview to Malcolm recently and Malcolm remembered that he had an unedited tape of the whole interview. Apparently BBC2-TV had bought some sitcom episodes and sent Joan Bakewell, with her very defined upper class English accent, to interview Bing, when they heard he was at Wimbledon, watching the tennis. When they found him and requested an interview, Bing was there without his toupee, but agreed to do an interview and wore his mackintosh and hat.

Bing watches the play at Wimbledon

The sound quality of this interview was not brilliant and it was clear from the outset that Miss Bakewell seemed oblivious as to his fame and probably really had little idea who he was. However she managed to put some questions to Bing, who was really quite patient with her. Asked whether he would be making any more films, he advised her that he would be filming *Stagecoach* and also said he had nine Hollywood Palace shows coming up.

She was interested in how Bing related to working on a sitcom, as opposed to films and he said that it was much quicker shooting sitcoms, films being much longer to complete. Joan then moved on to his partnership with Hope, asking whether the mutual insults ever got out of hand. Bing said 'No we were great friends, he's an outstanding person and much funnier than me.'

Interestingly she wanted to know where the word 'crooner' came from and if he was the first, Bing replying 'No it was Rudy Vallee.' She then switched to modern pop and asked if he liked the Beatles and

modern pop. Bing replied 'It's very good, but I don't like their hair do, their barbers must be really disgruntled about that.'

Finally, asking whether he would like to be a golf professional, he said 'No, you've got to be good to be a professional.' He said that he was probably a British four handicap now.

Cancel My Reservation clip

This was a clip from what Malcolm described as a 'dreadful film' starring Bob Hope, but with a cameo appearance from Crosby. It was a clip nobody had seen before and despite the description of the film, the small part we saw here was quite funny.

Hope was in jail and started daydreaming about being hanged in public, only to have a vision of a mocking and laughing Crosby in blue hat and pipe, followed by a host of other celebrities, including John Wayne.

Nike Commercial 'Straight down the Middle'

This was the recent commercial from Nike, promoting their new football, featuring Wayne Rooney and Rory McIlroy playing a round of golf, but with Rooney kicking a ball towards the greens. The point of interest for us was that Nike used the complete version of Bing singing 'Straight down the Middle'.

'Hey Jude' with Gary Crosby – Hollywood Palace – March 1st 1969

Malcolm played this clip to highlight a different and better ending to the song 'Hey Jude', from that on the album. Sung with son Gary, it was nicely harmonised and they looked comfortable and happy together, but of course nobody, Bing included, had any idea of what Gary was to put into his infamous book after Bing's death. Anyway, enough of that and as usual I spotted something to be cynical about in the clip, the female accompanying choir in the background, all dressed in white robes, with what looked like judges' wigs on their heads. Hilarious!

The 'new' Kraft songs

John Newton, whose newly discovered KMH material was reported on in the last issue of the magazine, had authorised Malcolm to play some of these rare Kraft songs. Malcolm indicated that John has 63 minutes of unheard Bing material, which if there is sufficient interest, could lead to a new CD being produced in the future. Malcolm played 'Alone', which Bing never sang again, along with a clever medley which included 'I Kiss Your Hand Madame', 'I'm Yours', 'I Surrender Dear' and 'From Monday On'.

The sound quality, although acceptable, had a great deal of background noise, which Ken Barnes and others felt, could be erased, or at least reduced. Members seemed quite keen for a CD to be produced, so watch this space.

****

Malcolm really does well to find all this material and turn it into something which is deliverable to the meetings and somehow he keeps finding new Bing related items, which make the proceedings so interesting. So congratulations Malcolm for such a stimulating series of clips. But of course the finale to our gatherings always include a DVD of film clips, put together by Malcolm and goodness knows how long that takes! But that's to come later.

The Leslie Gaylor and Michael Reynolds Collection Auction

Now for me this was a highlight of the day and well beyond my expectations and firstly I must publicly apologise to Colin Stewart for bidding so aggressively against him for one particular item. I did so verbally over breakfast the next morning and he was most graciously forgiving.

I don't need to really remind long standing ICC members, just how important and influential Leslie Gaylor was in respect of Bing Crosby's promotion in the UK during the latter years of his career and I covered that aspect in the opening part of this report. Leslie's Bing related collection and his association with his hero are legendary and although I never met him, I and many others are in awe of his efforts for Bing.

Bing with Leslie Gaylor in London

So here we were with selected and very special items from Leslie's prized collection. It almost seemed like sacrilege that we were about to auction these gems for the ICC funds. But better that, I felt, than it all going to an auction house where dealers would reap the benefits of what Leslie so cherished.

So with that in mind I bid, very aggressively for a 78 rpm record, personally signed by Bing, to Leslie, plus a beautifully framed Crosby Collector Magazine cover, inscribed to Leslie by Bing. I would have bid for more, but felt it was important for other members to benefit from this collection, with the knowledge that the items would be cherished by real Bing fans.

Under the pretend hammer of auctioneer Macfarlane, who I would add, has missed his vocation,

various photograph albums, rare Bing records from home and abroad, signed photos by Bing, posters from Leslie's wall, all beautifully framed, a beautifully covered book, 'The Crosby Years', by and personally signed by Ken Barnes, a whole pack of original Christmas cards from Bing and his family to Leslie over the years, (my word I wanted them as well, but felt I must not be too greedy) and other odds and ends from the collection were auctioned.

Michael Reynolds, the son of stalwart ICC contributor Fred Reynolds also donated items from his late father's collection for auction and it all made for a great interlude before Perry Huntoon gave another of his excellent presentations.

Perry Huntoon – Bing and his Ladies of Song – Part 1

Before I start on Perry's presentation, I must just get a dig in about the last time I tried to take notes during his talk, with countless names of bands, song titles and information leaving me exhausted, with fingers going into spasm! Then afterwards he calmly walked over to me and handed me a written overview of everything contained in the talk. So on this occasion, not intending to get caught out again, I extracted the typed notes before the presentation. Many thanks Perry, a most understanding and gracious gesture.

Perry, one of two speakers from America for this meeting, in his own words 'got into popular music about 1953 when Bing was still a big name and many stations had a weekly Bing Crosby hour.' He particularly liked how Bing interspersed with other singers, especially female singers, sixteen or so whom he commercially recorded with and many others who he performed with in other settings. This presentation was part 1 of 2, the second planned for next year's meeting. So there's another reason to come next year!

The following is a straight lift from the said document, Perry's commentary accompanying recordings of all the following songs.

Loyce Whiteman 'Ho Hum' – Recorded 1st May 1931

This collaboration occurred while Bing was singing with Gus Arnheim's orchestra. Loyce was the gal vocalist and no, she was not related to Paul Whiteman. She later married Harry Barris of the Rhythm Boys and this tune is from the Marx Brothers' film *Monkey Business*.

Dixie Lee Crosby 'A Fine Romance' – Recorded 19th August 1936

From the Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers film *Swing Time*, this was the only recording session Bing made with his wife. It was paired with 'The Way You Look Tonight', also a big hit for Astaire. It is generally conceded that there was an indefinable lack of warmth in these recordings.

Connie Boswell 'Basin Street Blues' – Recorded 25th September 1937

Connie, of course was part of the famous Boswell Sisters who had a frequent association with Bing. This tune, mostly associated with Jack Teagarden, is a feature for Connie, with Bing playing a subordinate role. Abe Lincoln emulated Teagarden on the opening. The flip side 'Bob White' turned out to be the big seller.

Frances Langford 'I'm Falling in Love with Someone' –Recorded 9th December 1938

America's sweetheart during WWII, she was a regular on Bob Hope's Pepsodent radio show and many USO tours. This Victor Herbert tune dated to 1910 and was from the Broadway show 'Naughty Marietta'.

Mary Martin 'Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie – recorded 13th March 1942

Mary Martin, of course, was a famous Broadway performer, best known for her roles in 'South Pacific', 'Peter Pan' and 'The Sound of Music'. She also starred with Bing in *Rhythm on the River* and *Birth of the Blues*, in which this tune was featured. The song is from 1905 and this Dixieland style version ranks among Bing's finest recordings. Spike Jones is the drummer.

Trudy Erwin 'People Will Say We're in Love' – Recorded 23rd August 1943

Trudy is not so well known, but was a vocalist with Kay Kyser in the 40's, before becoming the regular singer on Bing's *Kraft Music Hall*. She married Murdo Mackenzie, the sound engineer for the show. This recording, made during the time of the infamous recording ban, features the Sportsmen Glee Club as accompanists. The tune is from the Broadway play 'Oklahoma' and rose to no. 2 in the billboard charts. Sinatra also scored with it.

Judy Garland 'Mine' – Recorded 31st July 1944

Judy, of course, is well known and this is a Gershwin tune written for the 1933 show 'Jubilee'.

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COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE (AUST.) PTY. LTD. SYDNEY. N.S.W.
I STILL SUITS ME
(From "Show Boat")
(Kern & Hammerstein II) (Speed 78)
BING CROSBY & LEE WILEY, Vocal
With Orchestra
Directed by Victor Young
(L4373)
CHAPPELL'S
SYDNEY
Y6065
UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE, BROADCASTING AND COPYING OF THIS RECORD PROHIBITED

Lee Wiley 'I Still Suits Me' – Recorded 17th March 1947

Written by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein, this tune came from the 1936 hit *Show Boat*. It's the only

recording Bing made with Lee, who had made a name for herself by recording eight Gershwin songs in 1939.

A great presentation from Perry, whose passion for the music really comes across in his presentations, the time just flying by as his immense knowledge of the subject is imparted to his audience. Perry highlighted the possible lack of warmth in Bing's recordings with Dixie, apparently a widely held view, but I personally think they are lovely recordings and wish there were more. Another point he made, which I think everyone would endorse, was just how well Bing and Judy Garland hit it off in their recordings together.

I'm sure he won't be too offended when I say I nearly re-titled his presentation **'Perry's Missing Cursor'**, as it didn't matter how many times he tried, the cursor kept disappearing from the computer operating the overheads. Thankfully, Malcolm of the Magic Fingers, plucked the little blighter out of the air on a number of occasions and restored order.

Ken Barnes

Many of us present on the day, in particular relatively new kids on the block like me, had not heard Ken speak before. I think most of us had read his superb book 'The Crosby Years' and much of what he said is contained in that publication. I suppose we all sat in awe really, as this was the man, the record producer who actually persuaded Bing and Fred Astaire to record those brilliant albums late in their careers. But the circumstances surrounding this feat and the way Ken described the mechanics behind the final productions was spell-binding.

Malcolm introduced Ken and pointed out that it was 40 years ago when he made his first record with Bing and over the next 3 years produced some wonderful albums, which brought Bing back into the forefront of popularity. Working with Pete Moore at the time, some wonderful arrangements were put on vinyl. Malcolm also highlighted Ken's superb books on Sinatra and Bing.

Ken had visited the Leeds meetings many times in the past and on one occasion in 1999 where he was unable to attend, he recorded a filmed message (which we were shown) for the meeting with updates on forthcoming projects, both of his making, plus those of George O'Reilly, who also appears on the film talking about plans for the South Bank Show, featuring Bing.

Malcolm rightly stated that we owe a huge debt to Ken and he was introduced to loud applause.

Here my fingers were fingers of fire, trying to get it all down on paper for the report, and as I try to read it back now, it just looks as if a spider with ink on its feet has walked in circles on the paper. But alas interpret it I must, so here goes;

Malcolm had listed this as a question and answer session, but as it turned out only one opening question from Malcolm was asked.

'Ken, why record Bing?'

Ken explained that he got to know Johnny Mercer, who offered him a job managing a recording studio in the USA, but as he was only just married he turned it down. He did agree to go out there for two weeks after a request to sort out the failing studio.

Whilst there he came across Bing's business manager Basil Grillo, this at the time Crosby had just come out of hospital after surgery. He asked Basil 'Can he still sing?' Basil said he certainly could and Ken explained that he was a record producer and could he put in a bid?

He did so and subsequently visited Bing at his Hillsborough home, some 400 miles away. Alan Fisher, Bing's butler opened the door and said 'Mr Crosby is expecting you.'

He was ushered into a room, where Bing was sitting down writing, with no hair piece on. He didn't look up, Alan Fisher said 'Mr Barnes' and Bing carried on writing. Ken felt like a pupil up before the headmaster and he had heard all sorts of stories of how Bing could be. However he finished writing looked up and said 'Hello Ken' and was instantly very accommodating and very nice.

After chatting for a while, Ken said 'If you are thinking of recording, would you come over to London?' That didn't seem to trouble Bing and although Bing was not committal about a possible project, he signed a tape box for Ken with the words "To Ken, I hope we work together, Bing Crosby."

Two weeks went by and on returning home, Ann, his wife said 'Bing Crosby called and left a phone number.' He called back and Bing said 'Did you get my letter?' 'No' was the reply, but apparently Bing had only sent it two days before, not realizing it would take five or six days to get to the UK. Bing said, 'Read it and get back to me.'

Eventually United Artists, with some trepidation, agreed to have some sessions to see what Bing sounded like, also asking the question, 'Can he still sing?'

A selection of Johnny Mercer's songs from the new "Good Companions" musical was put before Bing, who liked them. Mercer was also happy to record and subsequently Bing did a couple of songs with the rhythm section. This showed that he could still sing and plans were made for an initial album and also for a second, where Bing chose songs he had not done before. This resulted in Pete Moore writing like crazy on musical arrangements for the sessions.

Bing arrived in February 1975 and undertook a mammoth recording session over six days. When the albums were completed, Bing was on the way out and he quipped, 'Anything else, give me a shout.'

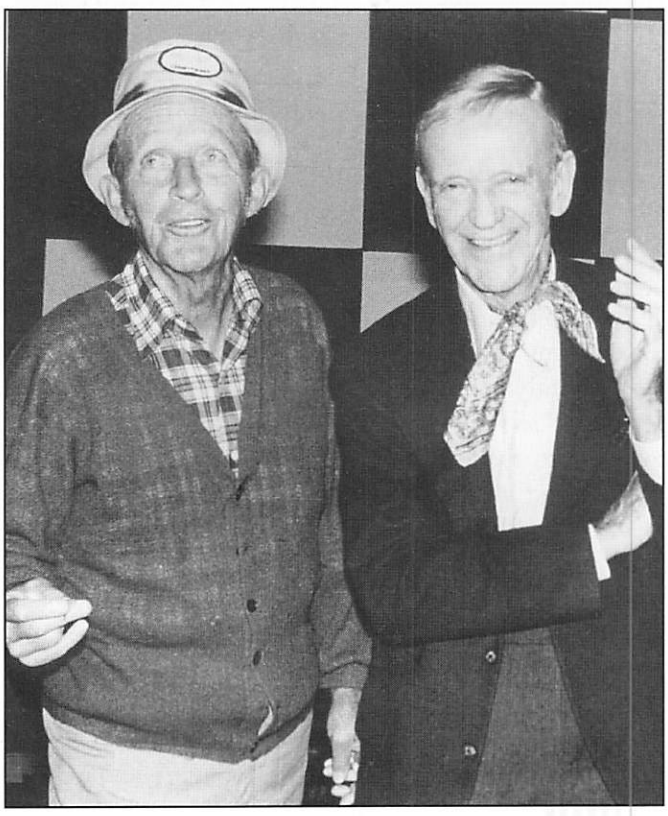
With this in mind Ken, who was already negotiating for a solo album with Fred Astaire, wondered if he could get Fred to do a duet album with Bing too. As a first step, Ken wrote to Fred's agent and a reply was received that

Astaire might be interested in doing a solo album and to 'talk a deal.'

The intention was to do some of Fred's famous film songs, and on hearing that Fred didn't want to come to London, Ken visited him at his home and mentioned that he would like to include some of the songs written by Astaire himself. Whereupon Fred's eyes lit up and he performed the song 'Life is Beautiful' on an electric piano in his bedroom. Eventually it was settled that they would do half contemporary songs and half of his and Fred agreed to come to London!

Knowing that Bing Crosby was coming to London at the same time, Ken suggested a duet album with him and Fred. There followed a series of communications between the artists and agents, with Ken having to convince all parties of the viability of the project. But eventually, after many discussions as to who would have top billing, what material would be used and how to actually get Bing and Fred together at the same time, Fred came to London hoping to rehearse with Bing before the actual session. Unfortunately Bing did not! Three nights went by, with Fred constantly asking 'Where's Bing?' Ken phoned everywhere he thought Bing might be, Gleneagles, St. Andrews etc, only to find he had just left each one. Then suddenly an unconcerned Bing phoned from Claridges and asked, 'Is Fred in town?' 'Yes, for about a week' was the reply.

Bing, on hearing that Fred was getting irritated, sent a message 'Don't worry Fred, we'll just do 15 minutes round the piano.' On hearing this Fred said, 'He's always been like this, I've worked with him before. But, I've got to rehearse, I can't work like this.'



Fred and Bing at work in the studio.

Fred then started to fret about the music scores and who would sing what parts, 'Will Crosby do it the same way? Will he ad-lib? He's going to destroy me.'

To make matters worse, when Crosby did arrive for the sessions, Fred had underlined in red and blue, all the lines for who would sing what! Crosby then took a look at the music and said, 'You know it would be better if I did these lines and you these' and he promptly changed all the red and blue, but then changed his mind minutes later!

Ken suggested that Bing was really doing all this to relax Fred, who always wanted to know exactly what he was doing, and when. Bing didn't worry about anything, other than key and tempo.

Despite Fred's worries it all went well, with both artists coming in with genuine ad-libs throughout the session. 'It was a wonderful feeling to get them together,' Ken said.

It didn't end there though, Crosby getting one more up on Fred, when Ken, realising that Fred had missed one line of a song, suggested to Bing that they re-record it. Bing said, 'What line?' 'This one,' said Ken. 'That's Fred's line, it's his fault, not mine' and with that he promptly left and Fred had to sing the missing line.

One particularly amusing exchange was when a tap-dance sequence was required for a number, whereupon Fred insisted he would not do any dancing. So Ken tried everything, including clapping two shoes together. Fred hearing this said, 'It sounds terrible, it must be taps by feet,' then later 'You son of a gun, put the microphone on the floor and I'll do it now, cause tomorrow I'll give you all sorts of arguments.'

Fred then promptly did three versions of formats and insisted that it was the last dancing he would do. Ken even suggests that it was, in fact, the last dancing Fred ever did do!

Ken finished with a few comments on what it was like to work with Bing Crosby, suggesting that he was so easy to work with, but was adamant in respect of second takes and you had to give him a really good reason why he should do it. Then he would do as many as you liked.

He related a lovely story, when at the end of a session he saw a young man on the set holding out a phone. He was listening to the playback of Bing singing so that his mother could hear it. Bing went over to him and said 'What are you doing?'

'Playing your last track to my mum, she loves your singing.'

Whereupon Bing turned and said to the crew, 'Play back that track and take me out.' He then took hold of the lad's phone and said 'Hi mum' and promptly sang the whole song to his mum.

Ken, this was a wonderful rendition and those slightly younger and who came into this arena relatively late in Bing's career, just feed off stories like this. I have your book 'The Crosby Years' and I enjoyed it immensely, but hearing you talk through all this was

such an uplifting experience and I, and I suspect other younger members, can only marvel at what it was like, not only to produce people like Crosby and Astaire, but visit them in their homes and become, almost part of their lives. I am so envious, but thrilled to listen to your memories. Very many thanks on behalf of all those at the meeting.

So just one speaker to go, it seems like hours since I started typing up these notes.....actually it was! Is anyone really going to read all this?

Bob Phillips – Growing up with Bing

This presentation was given directly after a rather splendid dinner, where my intention was to have a light, low calorie meal of selected fish, salad and perhaps a little fruit to finish. Fat chance! Like most others, I laid into every starter apart from the soup, followed by an enormous plate of roast beef, Yorkshire puddings, roast potatoes, all the trimmings and finished with a fattening cheesecake with lashings of cream. And guess what; my job is as a cardiac rehabilitation trainer, getting heart attack survivors back to full fitness. I rest my case!

We were so fortunate this year to have three speakers, whose presentations covered a wide range of Bing aspects and Bob Phillips, making up the trio, gave a stunning presentation. I must admit to not knowing Bob's history and when Malcolm explained that this was a man who, in his youth had worked for Bing Crosby Enterprises and had been part of a group of specialists working on building a video tape recorder for Bing in 1951, my ears pricked up and immediately I was ready to go for this third presentation. Malcolm echoed what I believe all of us were thinking, in that it's always good to hear from someone that actually worked with Bing, which as the years roll on, gets harder and harder to achieve.

Bob explained that as a young man, he didn't really appreciate just what he was becoming involved in and how important Bing Crosby was at that time and how he pioneered and promoted advances in sound recording during the fifties.

He outlined in great detail how recording advancements materialized from the 1890's, when there were no microphones, limited audio frequency and range, to the 1920's, which saw the birth of audio, with the gradual development of microphones and production of live shows, with RCA a big power in the growing industry.

From 1927 there was the CBS Network, moving through to the 1930's with the industry really finding its way, with quality mikes, mixing sources and news and propaganda reaching across the globe and at this stage, recordings still could not be edited.

The 1930's threw up good strong music sources in the shape of the Dorsey Brothers and Bing Crosby, with the 1940's seeing the break-up of the NBC radio network into two networks, Red-NBC and Blue, which became ABC. These were the war years where we saw the growth in transcriptions in the AFRS shows and rapidly developing technology.

However, it was after the war that there was an explosion of changes, with new networks, new types of shows, better quality audio and importantly, the tape recorder. Of course at this time all the equipment and machines were heavy and not easy to transport, the 'Scully Lathe' being the best example. But it had the ability to make transcription discs and a master copy to make phonograph records.

Bing was at the height of his fame at this stage and in 1946 was on the NBC Radio 'Kraft Music Hall'. However Bing did not want to keep doing live shows, wanting to devote more time to his family, hobbies etc. and during the 1947/48 radio season, magnetic tape recording started.

1946-49 saw the airing of ABC Radio's 'Philco Radio Time', followed by 1949-52 for CBS Radio, with 'The Bing Crosby Show for Chesterfield'. Bing actually left NBC in mid-1945, but Kraft sued him and he returned in February 1946 to complete the season.

During this time Jack Mullin demonstrated his 'Modified Magnetophon' and on the 10th August 1947, Bing recorded his first show for the 1947/48 season. 1949 saw the audio tape era, with a partnership between Crosby and Jack Mullin and with recorded shows now going out, Bing had time for his other pursuits. The audience shows were more fun and the ABC Radio Show became a great success.

Inspecting the latest developments with Jack Mullin (left) and Wayne Johnson.

As technology advanced the show travelled, with machines becoming more portable and with handles for carrying. The radio shows were produced weekly, with more and more technical creation. No one knew they were not live. Bing also had the final say on jokes and

most everything else. If he didn't like it, it didn't go out.

Bob then showed an overhead of the Bing Crosby Enterprises building, pointing out both his and Bing's office, plus the Video Recorder Lab, then one showing the separate theatre, the CBS Vine Theatre, with the 'Crosby Show' stage, with the orchestra at the back, singers on the right, the main mike on the left for Bing, announcers and guests. There were twelve mikes in total.

Different tricks of the trade were being invented and Bob, who was based elsewhere listening to the show, always sang along with Bing, learning his phrasing. The producers often went to where Bing was at any time, including Elko, for current inputs to the show. Bing and his guests, as a result, were more relaxed and all the recording staff were the best Bing could find.

A whole range of audience reactions was recorded, including groans, laughs, orchestra sounds etc, with new ideas, including stereo sound developed.

'Bing didn't read music, so we as recording technicians had to, but he was very adaptable. If he blew it, he would chuckle, think about it and adapt and then you never really knew he had blown it in the first place,' said Bob.

'We had to have an understanding of perfect pitch and how to edit and back up a score. We had to match various tempos, pitches and acoustics and what audience reactions to use and really importantly, know we must not cut the breath off when editing. But most important, don't let the producer get to you!' In stressing the importance of recording the breath of the singer when editing, Bob said 'After all you can't talk if you haven't breathed,' which led one wag to say 'Ladies can!'

The 1950's asked the question 'where did everyone go?' Suddenly it was TV, not radio and a desire for a video recorder. Again Bing led the charge and set up a group to build a VCR and in 1954 his first TV show was broadcast, although this was filmed. Bob recalled recording at Bing's ranch in Nevada and his insistence that they brought with them some special ice cream across the desert from Los Angeles, hundreds of miles away.

Using the term again, this was a stunning and extremely informative presentation from a man who was obviously living the dream and at the height of his profession. As with the other speakers, I could have listened to more of their recollections, but time was marching on and Malcolm's latest DVD was waiting in the wings.

Bing at the Movies – Volume 6 – Malcolm Macfarlane

For the last six years Malcolm has produced a one-off 2-hour DVD for the finale of our Leeds meetings, blending a massive range of clips from Bing Crosby's films into a wonderful mix of acting and song, ranging from his early to late films. This year proved no exception and we were again treated to a presentation of Bing's film work through the decades.

One wonders how Malcolm manages to find unused clips after so many compilations and I must admit to asking myself what films were represented in some of the clips. Of course, being the only one in the room with a list of the songs and films, I only had to glance down when nobody was looking for clarification. This was the list.

1. For You 2. Please 3. Boo-Boo-Boo 4. Love in Bloom 5. Love Is Just Around the Corner – June In January 6. Swanee River – It's Easy to Remember 7. Two for Tonight – Without a Word of Warning 8. You're a Sweet Little Headache 9. Hang Your Heart on a Hickory Limb – East Side of Heaven 10. Jimmy Valentine – In My Merry Oldsmobile 11. You Lucky People You – It's Always You 12. Only Forever 13. A Horse That Knows the Way Home 14. I'd Rather Be Me 15. Silent Night 16. O Sanctissima 17. Swinging on a Star (Duffy's Tavern) 18. You Keep Coming Back Like a Song – Night Club medley – Everybody Step – Blue Skies Finale 19. I Kiss Your Hand Madame – Emperor Waltz 20. My Heart Is a Hobo 21. Harmony 22.When Irish Eyes Are Smiling (The Road to Peace) 23. Early American (You Can Change the World) 24. Life Is So Peculiar (with Peggy Lee) 25. June in January (The Joker Is Wild) 26. Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep – Gee, I Wish I Was Back in the Army 27. A Second Hand Turban and a Crystal Ball 28. A Little Love, A Little While – Once Upon a Long Ago 29. Man on Fire 30. Say One for Me – The Secret of Christmas 31. Now You Has Jazz

Many thanks to Malcolm for another great production and for all the hard work and time put in to produce something on this scale.

As usual the DVD was auctioned at the end for the ICC funds and on this occasion, reluctantly I did not bid, still racked with guilt about my rather excessive bidding in the earlier auction. Still, no need to bid next year, as we are all getting a copy of the last DVD.

My Conclusions

This is the bit, when I get all emotional and carried away. As I explained to both Malcolm and Michael, one of the reasons I sit isolated on the side of the meeting room, is that I can see most of the people attending and watch reactions and take in the various comments made during the day.

This gives me the opportunity to gauge things and in particular, reactions to what is being presented and it gives me my little ideas as to how to bring the report together, rather than it just being a list of facts as to who did what and when.

This is particularly evident during the DVD showing, which is two hours long and the faces on the assembled gathering often tell a story. I can also put my pen down at this point and reflect on the day.

All sorts of feelings flow through my mind at this juncture and as I scan the faces of those people intently watching, I realise that, for many of a certain age, this was their era, the time of their youth and development, times of despair and of happiness, memories of times

long past, through the vehicle of Bing Crosby's music and films.

Bert Bishop was another to pose with Bing's hat and pipe.

As I said earlier in this report, I came into the ICC quite late and was only born six years after the war. But as I watched some of older members, dare I say veterans, I wondered what was going through their minds, when scene after scene must have reminded them of exactly where they were when they first heard or saw them.

How do they feel now, knowing that many of the names mentioned at our meeting, or faces appearing on the screen are no longer with us? I watched Des Hellier, not in the best of health, being wheeled into the meeting after his absolute insistence on attending. I watched his face and saw the happiness in his eyes when we photographed him wearing Bing's hat and holding his pipe. I thought of Ron and Anita Field in the front row and realised that, whatever else transpired at the meeting, it was worth coming just to hear Anita's testimony and meet Ron again, after his near death experience.

Yes, I know it all happened many years ago and that the ICC membership diminishes year on year, but I feel really privileged to be part of this group of people, all with a common love of Bing Crosby's music and I grieve for the faces of those I have come to know and respect at the meetings, only to find that they will not be attending anymore.

But I don't mean this as all doom and gloom, nothing lasts forever and memories are super precious. Bing Crosby did not seek aggrandisement in his lifetime, in fact he shunned it. But I wonder how he would feel now with the knowledge that his music and memory still reaches the hearts of people to this day and that when played to a man threatened with death, his music was instrumental in that person staying alive.

Perhaps those who have gone have already told him, perhaps we will. And the 2014 meeting ended with Bing singing 'The end of a perfect day.'

Bob Halls

Beatles covers: The good, the bad and the ugly

The British Newspaper *The Independent,* had a feature on cover versions of Beatles songs on October 18. This is what they had to say about Bing. Apart from the ending. I still think his version is pretty good though!

Bing Crosby, Hey Jude (1969)

Crosby's bloke-next-door-singing-in-the-bath vocal style doesn't suit all songs. Frankly, it doesn't suit all bathrooms, and this is one take that would have been best left behind the smallest room's door with a note on it saying "I wouldn't go in there yet". At the end of the Second World War, US soldiers voted Crosby the man who had done the most for their morale. Luckily the war ended 24 years before he could inflict this on them. The way he replaces the "Na-na-na..." ending with "Pom-pom-pom..." would have called for immediate surrender.

Bing Crosby - The Russ Evans Music Show

Russ Evans, who broadcasts for Ridge Radio, a Community Radio show in Tandridge, Surrey in the UK is mounting a 3-hour tribute to Bing on 11 December, starting at 21:00. Tune in at www.ridgeradio.co.uk

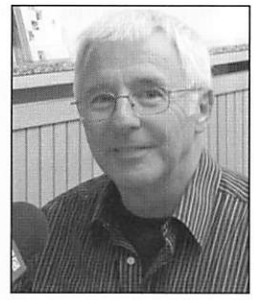
Urban Stages tribute – December 2 – Gary Giddins

Roger Schore writes:

There's a producing company here in the city named Urban Stages who put on cabaret shows between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Opening night this year December 2nd is a tribute to Bing co-hosted and curated by Gary Giddins. Music director Bill Zeffiro is also hosting. Steve Ross, I suppose is the biggest name attached to the enterprise and he should be great, but other NYC cabaret luminaries such as Jeff Harnar, Mary Foster Conklin and Marissa Mulder will also be featured.

Urban Stages is located at 259 West 30th Street (between Seventh and Eighth Avenues).

BING ON THE BOX



Malcolm Macfarlane surveys the TV and radio scene of the last four months.

TV highlights - USA & Canada

The PBS Documentary – *Bing Crosby Rediscovered* – is due to be shown on PBS around the time this magazine should arrive and we shall have a review next time.

Crosby films seen on TV since last time include:

High Society	TCM
High Time	FXM
Let's Make Love	FXM
My Favorite Blonde	TCM
My Favorite Brunette	TCM
The Princess and the Pirate	TCM
Road to Bali	TCM

Nowadays with on-demand Internet streaming becoming more and more popular we should also mention Netflix which has a large number of Bing titles. I do not have details of those available for streaming but Netflix's DVD rental service has the following films:

Anything Goes (1956) - College Humor - Connecticut Yankee - Double or Nothing - Emperor Waltz - Going My Way - Here Come the Waves - Here Comes the Groom - Holiday Inn - Just for You - Let's Make Love - Rhythm on the Range - Rhythm on the River – Riding High - Road to Bali - Road to Morocco - Road to Rio - Road to Singapore - Robin and the 7 Hoods - That's Entertainment - That's Entertainment II - The Country Girl - The Road to Hong Kong - Waikiki Wedding - We're Not Dressing - White Christmas

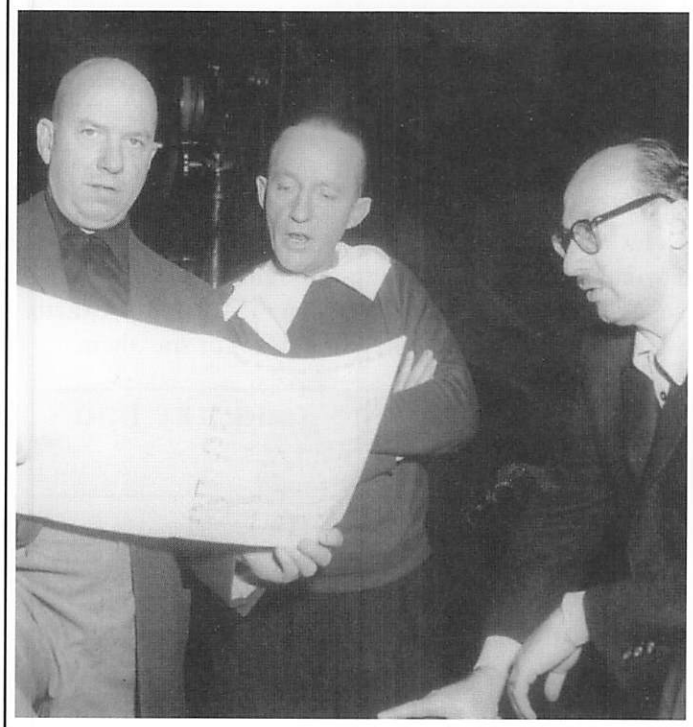
plus TV programs such as:

A Bing Crosby Christmas - Bing Crosby in Dublin - Bing Crosby's White Christmas USO Show - Bob Hope: Road to Comedy - Hollywood Singing and Dancing: The 1940s - Sinatra: The Classic Duets - The Legendary Bing Crosby

In August, PBS broadcast a special about Jimmy Van Heusen and the pre-show publicity included the following:

Jimmy Van Heusen: Swingin' with Frank and Bing celebrates the four-time Oscar-winning composer whose musical genius created dozens of beloved classics for the American Songbook. With a remarkable career that spanned five decades and several eras in popular music, his close association with two of the greatest entertainment icons of the last one hundred years — Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby — resulted in numerous hit songs for both.

Featuring interviews with Frank Sinatra, Jr., Harry Crosby, Tony Bennett, Angie Dickinson, Shirley MacLaine, Woody Allen and John Pizzarelli along with archival footage of timeless performances by Sinatra, Crosby, Judy Garland and many others…Jimmy Van Heusen's relationships with Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra were musical magic, and the composer's four Academy Award-winning songs are all best known for their Crosby-Sinatra performances: "Swinging on a Star," sung by Crosby in *Going My Way* (1944), "All The Way," performed by Sinatra in *The Joker Is Wild* (1957), "High Hopes" sung by Sinatra in *A Hole in the Head* (1959), and "Call Me Irresponsible," performed by Jackie Gleason in *Papa's Delicate Condition* (1963) but made famous by Sinatra and Jack Jones. In addition, Van Heusen won an Emmy for the song "Love and Marriage" from the 1955 live television production of *Our Town*. His collaborations with Crosby included the creation of songs for six of the seven Crosby-Hope "Road Pictures," as well as for the all-time Hollywood classics *Going My Way* and *The Bells of St. Mary's*.



Jimmy Van Heusen (left) with Bing and Sammy Cahn.

Sinatra recorded over 80 songs by Van Heusen — more than any other composer — including "Come Fly with Me," "Here's That Rainy Day," "The Second Time Around" and "The Tender Trap." Close friends and musical kindred spirits, "they got into music together, they got into movies together and they got into trouble together," says Frank Sinatra, Jr. in the program.

David Lobosco saw the program and commented on the Crosby Fan World site:

"The Jimmy Van Heusen broadcast had more about Sinatra in it, but Bing was pretty prominent in it. I like how they gave Bing credit for "The Second

Time Around". So many times, Sinatra is given credit for singing that song. It was a great documentary and besides Bing and Sinatra, I learned a lot about Van Heusen."

Carmela Amari saw it too and commented:

"Also, Tony Bennett says a lot of nice things/true facts about Bing."

David Hinckley writing in the *New York Daily News* on August 9 summed it up saying:

"Jimmy Van Heusen" leaves a clear impression, strongly supported by multiple clips of singers performing his songs, that no "great composers" sentence should omit his name."

Let's hope the program is made available internationally for overseas members.

Back in July, Steve Fay saw the CBS "This Morning" feature when Bing got a prominent mention in an item about Levi Strauss, the blue jean manufacturer. They were in the news for buying the naming rights for a sports stadium, but the report included a section about Levi's history. In the part about celebrities who helped to popularize wearing Levi's jeans, including James Dean and Bruce Springsteen, Bing got by far a much more substantial mention, including photos of him wearing Levi's on his ranch and wearing the denim tuxedo Levi's made for him after learning that he had been turned away from a fancy hotel. The feature indicated that that particular tuxedo is in the Lexi's vault and the reporter got to try it on.

Our expert on this matter, Bing's niece Carolyn Schneider, responded to my email about it saying:

Thank you for your email with the internet link regarding a CBS TV show that featured the Levi Company and especially the subject of the denim tuxedo. Once again, however, a mistake was made and not corrected. The reporter on the show led the audience, to believe that Levi owned the original jacket worn by Bing, when he said, "I'm going to try on Bing Crosby's jacket". Although Ms. Downey, the Levi historian clearly told the reporter that this is an exact replica of Bing's jacket.

I was very fortunate to work with Ms. Downey while writing my book, "Bing: On the Road to Elko". Therefore I know for a fact that Levi does not have Bing's original jacket. Rather, they have 3 replicas, I have discovered 14 others. Actually, I have one myself.

Finding the true Crosby denim tuxedo has been a passion of mine. Not only as a piece of celebrity memorabilia, but also as an item of historical significance. Thank for you helping me set the story straight.

And the tuxedo produced more publicity for Bing when the *San Francisco Chronicle* carried Evan Sernoffsky's in-depth article about Carolyn's search for Bing's original jacket on August 17. Then on Labor Day, Bob Grace spotted a re-run of the feature first shown in July on CBS. It is absolutely amazing the amount of coverage generated by the Bing tuxedo over the years.

Many of you will know that *Boardwalk Empire* is a period crime series airing on the premium cable channel HBO. The series is set in Atlantic City, New Jersey, during the Prohibition era and the first episode of the final series was seen in September. The action has now reached 1931, a year when Bing really burst on to the scene, and it was therefore entirely appropriate that the episode had the young Mr. Crosby singing "Out of Nowhere" followed by "Great Day" on the soundtrack. Bing reappeared in episode 3 too singing "The Little Things in Life" over the closing credits. The following week we had three Bing tracks playing in the background – "Dinah", "I'm Thru with Love" and "Dancing in the Dark".

PBS has been airing THE ROOSEVELTS: AN INTIMATE HISTORY which chronicles the lives of Theodore, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, three members of the most prominent and influential family in American politics. This seven-part, fourteen hour film follows the Roosevelts for more than a century, from Theodore's birth in 1858 to Eleanor's death in 1962. It was not surprising that Bing should be heard on the soundtrack. Some of the comments on the series seen on Facebook were:

Greg Sparky Kalkhoff Extremely well done, but a tad slow and languishes at times. However, the Bing Crosby sound tracks were nice....and there was a little Bix/Louie in there too. But, the jazz sound track did NOT always correlate with the years that were being documented. In part 1 and 2, many of the sound tracks were the Firehouse 5.

Greg Van Beek The recording of Bing singing "O Little Town of Bethlehem" during the segment just after Pearl Harbor in 1941, was actually recorded in 1955! And, of course, the familiar recording of "White Christmas", recorded in 1947 (not the original... and closer to the time period... from 1942).

Jon Oye – I've been sporadically catching bits and pieces of Ken Burns' 14-hour Roosevelts documentary...it was nice (and altogether fitting and proper) to hear Bing's voice accompanying this historical epic documentary.

USA & Canadian Radio

Greg Van Beek has been continuing his weekly radio series *Nostalgia Radio Time* on 1420 AM WJUB and this is on for an hour each Saturday starting at 9 pm (CST) / 10 pm (ET) and it always has a "Bing Sings" segment. You can tune in online at the www.1420thebreeze.com or you can listen to the previous two weeks shows by going to the website and clicking on the 'audio archives' link.

On October 11, Greg featured the eight songs Bing recorded on that day in 1977, just 3 days before his death. For good measure, he added in "Come Share the Wine" plus the Crosby-Clooney radio show of October 11, 1961 and the pocket-sized A & E Biography radio show from 2004.

Greg also popped up in a live phone interview on Ronnie Paul Jr.'s TV show in Fresno, CA on August 2nd to talk about Bing and Bob Hope.

Arne Fogel's Saturday night radio program "The Bing Shift" is still being aired at 7 p.m. (CST) on KBEM-FM "JAZZ 88" (88.5 FM) in Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota, and it can be picked up internationally, at http://jazz88.mpls.k12.mn.us/ . As usual, we can give

an example: Arne's August 23rd broadcast was titled *Bing Sings: "Goin' Home!"* and the songs played were:

Home Cookin' - Far from Home - I'm Wingin' Home - The Old Plantation - Don't Ever Be Afraid to Go Home - Dear Hearts and Gentle People

PLUS: Paradise - Pistol Packin' Mama - Something to Remember You By - The Rose of Tralee - Skylark - Maybe I'm Wrong Again - Oh! How I Laugh When I Think How I Cried About You - Swing Low, Sweet Chariot - Those Were the Days

We have often mentioned that KEZW and the Glenn Miller Archive at the University of Colorado present the ***Star Spangled Radio Hour*** every Saturday night at 6pm. Hosts Rick Crandall and Dennis Spragg introduce rare live big band radio broadcasts from the 30s and 40s each week. On July 26, they broadcast Bing's *Kraft Music Hall* show of July 27, 1944 with guests Sonny Tufts and Marilyn Maxwell. It's always interesting to hear the hosts chat about each show and they are both very knowledgeable and also huge fans of Mr. Crosby.

Rich Conaty's long-running ***"The Big Broadcast"*** shows from New York on WFUV were highlighted by Ken Crossland in our last issue. Rich puts a musical spotlight on the classic sounds of the 1920s and '30s which of course includes Bing. It's heard on Sunday nights from 8pm-Midnight (ET) and you can listen again through the WFUV archives on the Internet.

TV highlights - UK

Films seen since our last issue was prepared were:

High Society	Channel5
Holiday Inn	Sky Greats
Let's Make Love	SkyDramaRom
Road to Bali	TCM
Stagecoach	Film4 & More4

Sky-TV now has 800 films on demand and these include several Bing movies such as *The Country Girl, Holiday Inn, Let's Make Love* and *White Christmas*. Netflix UK probably has some Crosby features as well but as I am not a subscriber I can't provide details. I do know that they have *White Christmas* though.

Stars of the Silver Screen

Sky Arts2 has been running a series called *Discovering Film* and in September Bing was the subject for discussion. The series had apparently been produced earlier this year by the UK based 3DD Productions and was originally named *Stars of the Silver Screen*. The Bing episode was number 3 of series 3.

Overall, it was a generally positive and affectionate look at Bing's film career with very good quality clips being used and linked by four film critics. The talking heads were Derek Malcolm (82, revered film critic for *The Guardian* for many years), Neil Norman (a film critic for the *Evening Standard*), Wendy Mitchell (Editor of *Screen International* and ScreenDaily.com) and Ian Nathan (Executive Editor of *Empire* magazine). They made some excellent comments and I liked one by Derek Malcolm – "Bing was the epitome of the decent American guy who had made it big on the screen." Inevitably there were many mistakes and I emailed the producer Lyndy Saville as follows:

I watched the Bing Crosby episode on Sky Arts2 last night and thoroughly enjoyed it. You presented Bing in a balanced but generally positive and affectionate manner. The clips were excellent and the talking heads made some telling comments. Bing is tending to fade from the public memory nowadays and your programme will certainly help to halt this process.

I realise that obsessive fans will tend to nit-pic on details and I'll try to resist this by only mentioning a few points just in case you have the chance to rectify them before selling the episode worldwide.

Al Rinker - your narrator called him Rinkler - had a sister called Mildred Bailey. She did not introduce Bing to Paul Whiteman. It was the other way round. Bing introduced Mildred to Whiteman.

Wendy Mitchell got a bit confused about the Rhythm Boys. The trio comprised Crosby, Rinker and Harry Barris. They were part of the Whiteman band which also included Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey and Hoagy Carmichael.

There were 7 Road films not 9, as stated by the narrator.

At one stage, the song "Dear Hearts and Gentle People" is played. I think you will find that you used the Bob Crosby version. Bob was Bing's brother.

It was stated that CBS was not happy with pre-recording. It was NBC Bing was working for at the time.

Bing did not found United Western Recorders although he may well have invested in it.

Bing's first marriage did not break up because of his wife's alcoholism. She died of cancer in 1952.

However, may I repeat that I thought it was a good programme which I enjoyed and I thank you for producing it. I shall enjoy watching the rest of the series.

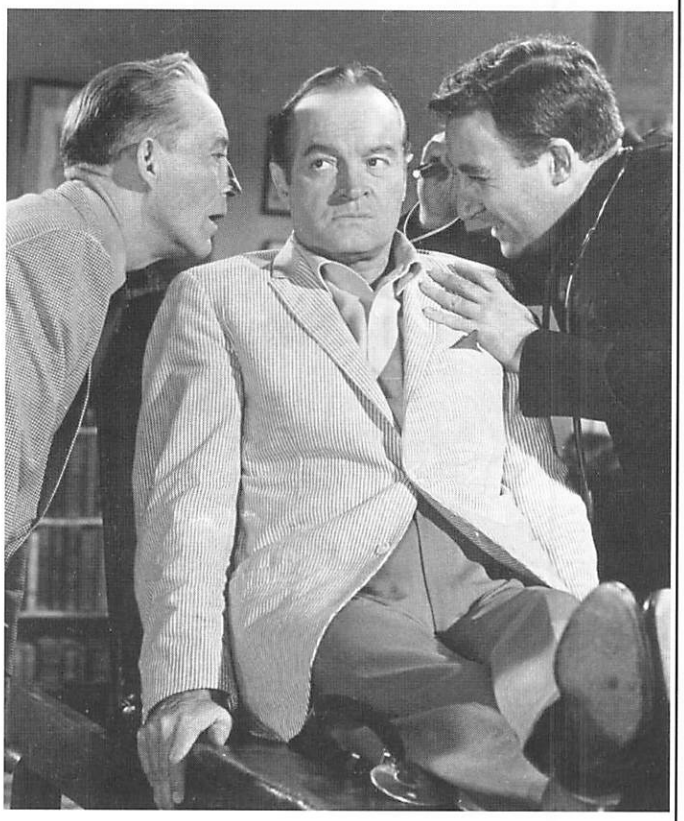
Sincerely,
Malcolm Macfarlane
Editor - BING magazine
International Club Crosby

No reply was received. Other points, I did not mention were Derek Malcolm's confusion over Bing's involvement in *King of Jazz*. The programme gave the impression that one of Bing's first on-screen successes was *Road to Singapore* and apart from *The Big Broadcast* the rest of his 1930s film output was ignored. The development of magnetic tape by Jack Mullin was poorly described and virtually attributed to Bing alone.

We were told that Peter Sellers and Joan Collins stole a little of the spotlight from Bing and Bob in *The Road to Hong Kong*. I suspect that Wendy Mitchell, who said this, may not have actually seen the film. Nevertheless, I was very pleased to see this programme being produced regardless of the inaccuracies. No publicity is bad publicity after all.

Britain's Most Dangerous Songs: Listen to the Banned: was a BBC4 programme shown in July looking at the songs banned by the Corporation over the years. For instance, during World War Two we were told that the BBC became extremely hostile to crooners from the USA, seemingly because their "American sentimentalisation of emotion" threatened to undermine the nation's fighting spirit. Bing's "I'll Be Home for Christmas" was singled out for special opprobrium

because of its "sickly sentimentality". It seems that the words "I'll Be Home for Christmas" were acceptable but not "if only in my dreams". We saw excerpts from Bing's appearance at the opening of the Stage Door Canteen in London in 1944 while the song was being discussed and then we heard a snatch of the more acceptable "Swinging on a Star". The only trouble with the accuracy of the story is that Bing's version, although recorded in 1943, was not released in the UK until July 1951 so presumably the BBC actually banned the recordings of the song by other singers.



Peter Sellers attempts to steal the spotlight from Bing and Bob in *The Road to Hong Kong*.

A 13-part series called *Hollywood Singing and Dancing: A Musical History* which originated in 2009, has been airing on Sky Arts1. In the second episode, which looked at *The 1930s: Dancing Away the Great Depression*, there was a useful 7-minute segment about Bing which had various celebrities, including Kitty Carlisle and Pat Boone, being very complimentary indeed about our man. Several excerpts from the Sennett shorts were seen. Episode 4 dealt with *The 1940s: Stars, Stripes and Singing* and again Bing popped up with extracts from *Rhythm on the River*, *Holiday Inn* and *Road to Singapore* being seen amongst others. The next chapter was still concerned with the 1940s and we saw Bing in excerpts from the Road films. Episode 6 reached the 1950s and we were told that Bing continued to be very successful with "his incredible presence and warmth." A very short part of the trailer of *Mr. Music* was shown together with extracts from *Road to Bali*. The 1960s were covered in the eighth instalment of the series and the film *Robin and the 7 Hoods* was highlighted as this was the last musical film for both Bing and Frank Sinatra. A clip of Bing, Frank and Deano singing together on the Bing Crosby Show of February 15, 1964 was used. And there was even more because the eleventh part, discussing the 1970s, had film of Bing recording his piece for *That's Entertainment*.

It was also nice to see *The Legendary Bing Crosby* documentary popping up again on Sky Arts2 in September and in October.

UK radio

The National Presenters

If you want to hear Bing on the radio, it's not particularly rewarding listening to the nationally networked Radio2 but **Desmond Carrington** is a notable exception on his Friday night show. Over the last 4 months, Mr. Crosby has cropped up seven times with songs varying from "Happy Feet" to "Fugue for Tinhorns".

Don Black, the multi award-winning lyricist, came back to the airwaves in July for a few weeks and as usual he played a few Bings including "Come Share the Wine", for which he wrote the lyrics. Mr. Black finished his stint on August 31 and handed over to **Moira Stuart** who does not normally play the groaner. However, coming back from the Leeds meeting on October 5, I heard Moira introduce "Lazy River" with Bing and Satchmo. Ms Stuart felt the chorus from the backing singers was inappropriate but I don't think she realised that Johnny Mercer was part of this.

Clare Teal's show on Sunday nights has featured Bing only once in four months and that was "Swinging on a Star". Nothing from **Elaine Paige** but whilst shaving on Sunday, July 20, I heard **Clare Balding** play "When I Leave the World Behind" during an interview with writer Jimmy McGovern on her "Good Morning Sunday" show. **Anneka Rice's** early Saturday morning programme used "The Whiffenpoof Song" on August 9 and **Liza Tarbuck** played "Mama Loves Papa" on September 13. So Bing does crop up now and again if you are lucky.

BBC Radio4 broadcast a tribute to Bob Hope called **'A Century of Hope'** on October 11. The 30-minute programme – narrated by comedian Greg Proops – raced through Old Ski-nose's life and highlighted the importance of the Road films and Bob's Pepsodent radio show to his career. Hope's daughter Linda offered comments as did Bill Faith, his publicist for many years, and critic and biographer John Lahr. In the background we heard snatches of "Chicago Style" and then Bing's 1932 version of "How Deep Is the Ocean" leading in to Bing talking about his first meeting with Bob. "Sweet Potato Piper" and "Teamwork" were used to illustrate the partnership. American comedian Proops is a very different performer to Hope. He is a one-man-band whose comedy is improvised with a hard, often radical edge which is completely different to Bob's approach. After praising Bob's work up until the mid-sixties, Proops indicated that Bob's support of the Vietnam war and his "role as a corporate huckster and a friend of the powerful" led to a loss of his audience amongst younger people.

The local radio presenters

Anne Hopper at BBC Radio Cumbria (and on the Internet at www.bbc.co.uk/radiocumbria) has a remit to play music between 1930 and 1959 and naturally she is a real promoter of Bing on her Saturday night shows (10pm-midnight). In the four months to the end of June, Anne played a total of 38 tracks by the master. In discussing the BBC4-TV programme about songs once banned by the Beeb, she played Bing's versions of "Deep in the Heart of Texas" and "I'll Be Home for Christmas" as examples. The huge variety of the Crosby songs she played included lesser known songs such "Till the Clouds Roll By" and "The Big Movie Show in the Sky".

She continues to welcome requests by email to *anne.hopper@bbc.co.uk* so email her if you want to hear lots of Bing on the radio. There's a "Listen again" facility for up to 7 days after the initial broadcast.

Paul Barnes has a long-running two-hour show heard over seven BBC local radio stations and on the Internet starting at 11 p.m. on Saturday nights. A good friend of the Crosby voice, Paul has been using the 2013 Crosby calendar as a prompt for a Bing session each month and in July, he described the photo used on the calendar for that month and went on to play "Blue and Broken-Hearted". He followed that with "My Baby Said Yes" and a Philco commercial with Bea Lillie and Alec Templeton, undoubtedly the first time an advert for Philco had been heard on BBC!

The August 2013 calendar was duly examined on August 2 with "Tomorrow's My Lucky Day", "The Lady on the Two Cent Stamp" (from a 1938 KMH broadcast) and "Gotta Be This or That" (from a wartime "Jubilee" show) being played. Paul omitted to focus on the September calendar but resumed his usual practice in October when he played the "Song of the Month" for both months. Apart from the Calendar sessions, Bing plays the Groaner quite frequently and it was nice to hear "The Bold Fisherman" with Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart following Bacall's death in August

Bill Rennells has had a successful request show called *Harmony Night* on BBC local radio stations throughout the South East of England and on the Internet for some years. It's a three-hour broadcast starting at 10 p.m. on Sunday evenings and there is a "Listen Again" option. Normally, he receives around 30 requests for El Bingo during each 4-month period but this time it was noticeable that the volume has eased off. True there were 19 requests but at least eight of those came from the redoubtable **Stan White** with another couple from loyal supporter Ian Lawrence. Stan selected some lesser heard songs such as "Love Walked In", "My Heart Goes Crazy" and "So Would I" amongst others.

Wherever you are in the world, please email Bill with your Bing requests to *bill.rennells@bbc.co.uk.*

One presenter who is playing more and more Crosby each time is BBC Radio Lincolnshire's **Howard Leader.** His programme of big band swing and balladeers goes out each Sunday afternoon. There were eight requests for Harry Lillis during the last 4-months with songs ranging from "Dinah" (1931 version) to "Ballerina". There's a "Listen again" facility too. Again, why not email him a request? Email requests to *howard.leader@bbc.co.uk.*

BBC Radio Wales' **Dewi Griffiths** stood down on September 28 after 26 years of presenting his "A String of Pearls" show on Sundays. Before he went, he treated us to "Wait Till the Sun Shines, Nellie" and "Swinging on a Star". At the age of 83, Dewi has certainly earned a rest and we wish him a long and happy retirement. It is however the loss of yet another presenter who liked Bing, having lived through a time when our man was at the pinnacle of show business.

Beverley Humphreys with her *Beverley's World of Music* show on BBC Radio Wales on Sundays at 9 p.m. plays Bing quite frequently and we heard songs such as "True Love" (this crops up time and time again on many, many shows), "Around the World" and "Busy Doing Nothing". There is a "Listen again" facility.

Many local radio stations have weekend programmes which play our kind of music and John Bennett (BBC Radio Foyle in Northern Ireland), Gerald Jackson (BBC Radio Manchester) and Mike Carey (BBC Radio Derby) are well worth a listen. There are probably more but I'm not aware of them.

And don't forget **Jim Reilly's** hour-long Bing show which continues on Angel Radio (www.angelradio.co.uk) on Tuesday nights at 10:30 p.m. UK time. Also the station broadcasts a Bing radio show on Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m.

Australia

The Australian TV bio-channel (formerly known as The Biography Channel) proclaimed "The Legendary Bing Crosby" documentary their bio of the week when they showed it on October 12, presumably to tie-in with the anniversary of Bing's passing.

John Funnell's "I've Heard That Song Before" from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. every Wednesday on WNY FM 88.9 includes Bing every week and the show can now be heard online at www.wynfm.org.au/. The Golden Days community radio station on 95.7 FM in Victoria continues to have a half-hour programme at 3.00 p.m. on Wednesday afternoons called "On Air with Bing" which broadcasts a complete Bing Crosby radio show each week. This is presented by Bob Horsfall. Other radio programmes featuring our man are Peter O'Brien's "Music Showcase" on Eastern FM 98.1 (Mondays 12 noon to 2 p.m.) Loris Young's show on 3WBC FM 94.1 (Tuesdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) has plenty of Crosby too.

Malcolm Macfarlane **macwilmslo@aol.com**

Once In A While

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

James Garner, the amiable film and television actor who starred in popular television series *Maverick* and *The Rockford Files*, died on July 19. He was 86.

Born James Bumgarner in Norman, Okla., he left high school to become a merchant seaman before moving to Los Angeles, enrolling at Hollywood High and then returning to Norman, where he joined the Oklahoma State National Guard. He briefly went to work in his father's carpeting business in Los Angeles

until being called for duty in the Korean War. He served more than a year in the Korean peninsula and was awarded the Purple Heart before his discharge in 1952. He studied business administration at the U. of Oklahoma but left after a semester, ready to move towards acting.

Bing and James Garner run over their lines for the TV show.

Like many popular leading men of Hollywood's heyday, Garner boasted all-American good looks and a winning personality that carried him through comedy and drama alike. Garner won two Emmys and racked up a total of 15 nominations. He had his greatest impact in television, first on *Maverick* in the '50s and then in the '70s on *The Rockford Files*, for which he won an Emmy in 1977. For a time he seemed ready to inherit the aging Cary Grant's romantic comedy leading man mantle with such films as *The Thrill of It All* (1963) and *Move Over Darling*. Arthur Hiller gave him a meatier assignment, in the satire *The Americanization of Emily* opposite the then-red-hot Julie Andrews. He then nabbed the thriller *36 Hours* and during this period he appeared in Westerns including *Hour of the Gun* (in which he played Wyatt Earp), comedy Western *Support Your Local Sheriff,* and also neo-noir movie *Marlowe*. He featured strongly in films such as *Victor/Victoria, Boys' Night Out*, and, especially, *The Great Escape* which brought him his best notices. He said that he drew on his experience in the Korean War, during which he was the company scrounger, for the latter role. He landed a plum role opposite Sally Field in the comedy/romance *Murphy's Romance* in 1985 for which he captured his sole Oscar nomination for lead actor.

Bing invited Garner to be one of his guests on his March 2, 1959 special and they sang "Hooray for Love" together with Jo Stafford. Jim Garner was a keen golfer and was a regular attendee at the Crosby Pro-Am. In December 1960, he flew with Bing, Phil Harris and Randolph Scott to Tucson, Arizona, to play in a benefit golf exhibition for the Beacon Foundation at El Rio Country Club. So it's safe to say that he and Bing got along quite well. Garner's autobiography *The Garner Files: A Memoir* has several mentions about his participation in the Crosby Pro-Am.

Garner is survived by his wife, the former Lois Clarke, to whom he was married since 1956; daughter Greta "Gigi" Garner; and an adopted daughter, Kimberly, from Clarke's first marriage.

Lauren Bacall, the actress, died aged 89 on August 12. She was born in New York City as Betty Joan Perske on September 16 1924, and was the only child of William Perske, a salesman of medical instruments from Alsace, and his wife Natalia, of Romanian and German-Jewish extraction. They divorced when their daughter was six. The mother adopted the name Bacal; the daughter added an "l" to stop it rhyming with "crackle". She always disliked "Lauren", the name bestowed on her by Hollywood, preferring to be known as Betty.

Educated at the expense of wealthy uncles at a private boarding school, Highland Manor, Tarrytown, New York, and at the Julia Richman High School, Manhattan, Betty intended to be a dancer, having attended ballet classes since infancy. But in adolescence she was drawn to acting.

She first appeared as a leading lady in the Humphrey Bogart film *To Have and Have Not* (1944) and in 1945 she became Bogart's fourth wife. She was 25 years his junior and the partnership endured until his death nearly 12 years later. Along with her husband, she actively campaigned for the Democrats and protested against Hollywood's blacklist of suspected Communists. Bacall continued on in the film noir genre, with appearances in Bogart movies *The Big Sleep* (1946), *Dark Passage* (1947), and *Key Largo* (1948), as well as comedic roles in *How to Marry a Millionaire* (1953) with Marilyn Monroe and *Designing Woman* (1957) with Gregory Peck. Bacall worked on Broadway in musicals, earning Tony Awards for *Applause* in 1970 and *Woman of the Year* in 1981. Her performance in the movie *The Mirror Has Two Faces* (1996) earned her a Golden Globe Award and an Academy Award nomination. In 2009, she was selected by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to receive an Academy Honorary Award "in recognition of her central place in the Golden Age of motion pictures."

Lauren Bacall was said to be a fan of Bing's and she first appeared with him in a *Command Performance* show on December 16, 1944. In 1952, she and Bogart appeared on Bing's Chesterfield show on two occasions. She sang "I Don't Know Why" with Bing and also duetted with Bogart and Crosby on "The Bold Fisherman".

Guesting with her husband on Bing's Chesterfield show.

Bogart died in 1957 and in 1961 Lauren Bacall married the actor Jason Robards. (There had been earlier talk of marriage to Frank Sinatra, "but Frank just couldn't cope with the idea" she said years later). Her marriage to Robards ended in divorce in 1969. In 1983 there had been a possibility of her marrying Harry Guardino, a former film co-star, but it came to nothing. She had a son and a daughter with Humphrey Bogart and a son with Jason Robards.

GORD ATKINSON'S 'THE CROSBY YEARS'

Gord recalls Bing's most famous song.

This yuletide the most popular recording of all time, Bing's timeless classic, "White Christmas," will once again be heard around the world. The film that introduced the perennial Irving Berlin ballad, *Holiday Inn*, co-starring Bing and Fred Astaire, was released for the holidays of 1942. Since that time the Crosby name has been synonymous with Christmas.

In the dark days of World War II, Allied servicemen affectionately called him "Santa Claus without Whiskers" for he was the embodiment of the Christmas season. He lives on in our collective memory, for it is still not possible to think of Christmas without thinking of Bing.

The Crosby library of enduring Christmas songs reads like a Yuletide Hit Parade, "I'll Be Home for Christmas," "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," Christmas in Killarney," "Silver Bells," "Do You Hear What I Hear," and "Jingle Bells," to name a few. His recordings of traditional carols have lifted our hearts and spirits for seven decades.

In the 1973 December issue of *Variety*, the entertainment weekly, a feature story estimated that Bing's recording of "White Christmas" had sold well over 40 million copies. Typical of Bing's modest nature, he told me he found that figure quite high. "That's hard to believe. I'll accept it and hope that Mr. Berlin gets adequately compensated. He's the one who wrote it and is responsible for its success."

With several reissues over the years of his most famous recording, it is estimated now that its worldwide sales could be well over 100 million. Whatever the figure, it is without question the best-selling record in the history of the music industry.

During one of our conversations, a few weeks before Christmas 1974, Bing reflected on the impact of his most identifiable song: "I certainly didn't think "White Christmas" was going to be such a hit. I thought. I thought it was a very good score for *Holiday Inn*, but I had no preconceived idea what would be the hit song. "White Christmas" just stepped out, because it was wartime and so many people were away from home, away for their families, serving in the army, navy and air force and in faraway places – and a song like that is reminiscent of home and family, and that's why it had such an immediate and lasting impact, I believe."

Bing's musical conductor for many years, John Scott Trotter, was also the arranger on many of his most memorable recordings. I wondered if he ever had a feeling that one of their collaborations might be a hit. "When we made "White Christmas" I thought it was a very lovely tune, but I had no idea that it would turn out to be the most famous recording of all time. However, working with Bing and knowing the depth of his public acceptance, there was always a good chance that any of our sessions would be successful."

He also recalled how the song might have been recorded in a different manner than its now familiar arrangement. "There was an argument between Jack Kapp, who was the head of Decca Records, and Irving Berlin. The song was written for a scene in the picture that was set on the west coast. The lyrics of the verse began, 'I'm sitting here in Beverly Hills' – Berlin thought it was a marvelous poetic set-up for the chorus, but Kapp said it had nothing to do with the record. Kapp prevailed and we didn't record the verse, and as luck would have it, the movie setting for the song was changed later from sunny California to snowy New England."

When Bing heard Trotter's comments he had no recollection of the difference of opinion between Kapp and Berlin. "I don't recall a controversy. Gord, I know we didn't do the verse, not even in the picture. In fact it was done quite simply, sitting at a piano in a ruminative mood. There was no production, just a chorus or two with the leading lady, Marjorie Reynolds."

Holiday Inn has been acclaimed by several critics and film historians as the best original movie musical ever made. The charming and amusing plot concerned a

talented but weary entertainer (Crosby) who left his ambitious partner (Astaire) for the tranquility of a country inn, where he produced shows only on holidays. It was a magical teaming of the screen's two incomparable performers, who were in top form as they featured a Berlin melody for every holiday of the year.

Bing and Fred with Virginia Dale in *Holiday Inn*.

In 1954 another Crosby musical with Rosemary Clooney and Danny Kaye, took as its title "White Christmas" and revived the time-honored song on its soundtrack.

While on his lengthy overseas tour in 1944, Bing couldn't do a show without bringing a little bit of home to the front lines with "White Christmas." At the time of our last interview his thoughts went back to those bitter-sweet wartime days. "Well, it was always a kind of a wrench for me to sing the song," he confessed. I loved it of course, but at the camps and in the field hospitals, places where spirits weren't too high anyway, they'd ask for the song – they'd demand it – and half the audience would be in tears. It was a rather lugubrious atmosphere that it created, which you can understand, because of its connotation of home and Christmas, and here we were thousands of miles from either one. It was a rather sorrowing experience to have to sing it for these men and women when it made them feel sad. But I guess in retrospect that it was a glad kind of sadness."

In thinking back over his life and unparalleled career he made this final comment of appreciation and gratitude to his friends and fans: "To know that you have entertained, amused and made life a little more pleasant for people, wherever they happened to be, that's the greatest reward of all."

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: "The Crosby Years" remains available from Gord (see *Trading Post* for details.) For members who only wish to purchase a sampling of "The Crosby Years", Gord recommends either (or both) the Prologue and Epilogue which summates the series.

THE WAY WE WERE

The section of the magazine where we look at what was happening in years gone by.

100 YEARS AGO

In September, 1914, Harry "Bing" Crosby (aged 11) had entered the seventh grade at Webster and his teacher was Miss Helen (Nell) Finnegan. Around this time, he fought Jim Turner after the latter had insulted his sister Mary Rose and Bing bloodied Turner's nose. On November 4, Bing attended the birthday party of his friend Gladys Lemmon. During December, his class presented a Christmas play taken from the *Ladies Home Journal* and Bing played the part of a girl, much to his embarrassment.

75 YEARS AGO

Early in September, 1939, Bing (aged 36) was at the Del Mar race meeting but he would have been aware of world events as on September 1 German troops had invaded Poland. On September 3, Great Britain issued a formal declaration of war with Germany and WWII began.

Bing left for New York and no sooner had he departed than his twin boys entered the Good Samaritan Hospital to have their tonsils removed. The Groaner was unaware of the plans for the operation and presumably the death of Eddie Lang following a tonsillectomy in 1933 was a factor in the subterfuge. It was while he was in New York that his famous jump off the twenty-five-foot high board at Billy Rose's Aquacade Review in the New York World's Fair took place. He had been dared to dive off the board by his friend and $100 was staked on it. Ultimately Bing jumped instead of diving and his friend only paid up $65 because of this.

On September 20, Crosby recorded with the Andrews Sisters for the first time. The songs were "Ciribiribin" and "Yodelin' Jive" and they charted at #13 and #4 respectively with the latter staying 12 weeks in the charts. Then it was back to California and a return to the *Kraft Music Hall* on September 28. The guests on the opening show were Jackie Cooper and Bobby Riggs (tennis champion). Bob Burns, Ken Carpenter, the Music Maids and John Scott Trotter continued as regulars on the show and Bing appeared weekly until June 20, 1940. The audience share for the season was 23.3 which made it the top musical program but left it in seventh place in the Hooper ratings for evening programs as a whole. For the third year running, the Edgar Bergen program topped the table with a rating of 34.6 overall. Bob Hope's show entered the ratings with 25.0 which earned it sixth place.

In October, Bing, Bob Hope, and Dorothy Lamour began filming *Road to Singapore*, the first of the famous series. Filming continued until early December. On October 8, Bing helped to attract the largest attendance (187,730) at the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island, San Francisco, where he sang with George Olsen and his band in two free shows during the afternoon. The crowds were so vast that Bing was unable to reach the island by road and he had to be taken there by yacht. Matt DeVera, writing in *BINGANG* magazine, September, 1975 described the occasion.

> I was 22 years old at that time and had driven to San Leandro, picked up my girlfriend, now my wife, drove to the Bay Bridge but had to turn back because the bridge was packed with cars. There was no parking space at Treasure Island.
>
> I parked the car on an Oakland side street, went to the World's Fair on a train that resembled a street car. It was also jammed with people. I mean it was really jammed.
>
> It was a very warm day and Bing Crosby appeared on stage at 4:00 p.m. The crowd had waited for many hours to see Bing. Bing sang the following songs, among many others: "Pennies from Heaven," "El Rancho Grande," "An Apple for the Teacher," and "Somewhere over the Rainbow."
>
> I saw three women faint from the heat of the day and because of the crowd of people. I also saw two fellows fight. It started when Bing was singing "Pennies from Heaven." One began to whistle and hum as Bing sang; the other one told him to be quiet as he said, "I would rather listen to Bing!" Heated words and blows were exchanged almost causing a riot.
>
> Bing wore a brown suit, no hat. Posters throughout the fair read "Bing Crosby, the Most Popular singer in the Nation."
>
> It was impossible to get close to see him because of the tremendous crowd.

Sunday, December 10, was a very busy day for the Groaner. In the morning, he and Paulette Goddard played Bob Hope and Ruby Keeler in a charity golf match at Lakeside Country Club in front of 3,500 spectators. Hope and Keeler won. Starting at 4:30 p.m. Bing starred in the Gulf Screen Guild radio show *Mr. Jinx Goes to Sea* with Andy Devine and Jean Parker on CBS. On December 15, Bing returned to the recording studios after a 3-month gap to record three songs from *Road to Singapore* and he finished the session by recording "Between 18th and 19th on Chestnut Street" with Connie Boswell.

He welcomed the New Year at a party at the Racquet Club in Palm Springs. During 1939, Crosby had an incredible twenty-six chart hits. He received the *Downbeat* Award for Best Male Vocalist.

Bing sings at Treasure Island.

50 YEARS AGO

Bing (aged 61) was busily recording episodes for *The Bing Crosby Show*, a half-hour situation comedy on ABC-TV, which premiered on September 14 to mixed reviews.

> ...As a father he is sensible and witty. It's a family with no zany relationships—just a group of happy people whose life can be fun. He sings in each show, gives the youngsters sound advice. For instance, when elder daughter, Joyce pleads for an equal-terms relationship with her parents he explains: "You want to be us. And you can't. And you force us into trying to be you. And we can't. We're not meant to be friends, baby. I'm your father. And you're my kid. And if that's an outmoded parent-child relationship I'm all for it."
>
> It's quality with a pedigree. Most half-hour TV shows are budgeted at around 50,000 to 60,000 dollars a program. The Bing Crosby Show is closer to 70,000 dollars. Bing's take from this package, which he owns completely, is from 15,000 to 20,000 dollars a week.
>
> (*TV Week,* September 19, 1964)

> The feeling is inescapable, in watching the new Bing Crosby situation comedy series which premiered Monday night (14) on ABC-TV, that it's just about fifteen years too late in arriving.
>
> (*Variety*, September 16, 1964)

On October 6, Bing made a live guest appearance on the *Bell Telephone Hour* television show which came from NBC's Burbank studios. He was accompanied by Buddy Cole, although there are indications that he may have lip synched to a pre-recording.

Bing and Kathryn spent most of November at their Rising River ranch and it was there that Der Bingle received the sad news of Buddy Cole's death from a heart attack at the age of forty-seven.

Mr. Crosby was back in the recording studios early in December to complete the *That Travelin' Two Beat* album with Rosemary Clooney supported by Billy May and his Orchestra. Critical response to the album was lukewarm and few reviewers thought that it matched its "Fancy Meeting You Here" predecessor although *Variety* quite liked it.

> This parlay of Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney results in a fair session of Dixieland music pegged to a musical Cook's tour. While the sound is traditional, the repertoire is definitely offbeat, setting some surprising material into a two-beat format. The duo works with some amusing ideas in the title song, "Knees Up, Mother," "Roamin' in the Gloamin'," "The Daughter of Molly Malone," "The Poor People of Paris" and "I Get Ideas," plus a takeout on a Strauss waltz, "New Vienna Woods." This was the last session produced by Capitol's a&r exec, the late Si Rady.
>
> (*Variety*, March 31, 1965)

Frank Murphy, writing in a supplement to the British Crosby Society's *Crosby Post* of June 1965 was naturally very enthusiastic about it and ended his review with these words.

> My final summing up of this great album is that though with most albums I am usually selective and generally only play the tracks I like best – this one, I play all the way through every time I give it a spin – there just isn't a dud among the 12 four star tracks. Buy it, you'll see what I mean.

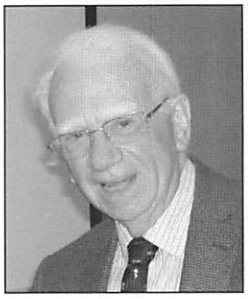
Over the years, Bing had received many crank letters and on December 11, San Francisco Police Department received a letter postmarked "Denver, Colorado," in which the writer said "if that son of a bitch Bing Crosby doesn't stop, he'll get a powerful bullet in the neck." The police passed the letter to the FBI and later that month, agents of the FBI visited Bing at his home at 101 Robin Road, and showed him the threatening letter. Bing was not concerned and was unable to offer any possible suspects.

On Christmas Eve, the Crosbys threw a Christmas party for their friends and staff. Kathryn and her mother prepared pheasant for forty-five and then Bing took the family out caroling. On their return, Bing sang carols and Irish songs for the guests.

Bing rehearses for the Bell Telephone Hour with Burl Ives and the McGuire Sisters.

KEEPING TRACK

Richard Baker looks at the new releases



A short while back I was remarking that we had been having a thin time. Well, I'm beginning to feel a little like a farmer who prayed for a little rain only to find himself inundated by a flood, because, by the time you read this, we will have been overwhelmed with new issues. A constantly running gentle stream is much preferable to drought followed by an overflow of Niagara proportions!

However to start with the issues actually in hand at the time of writing.

COMPACT DISCS

The Andrews Sisters Wake Up and Live! -The Songbook...The Energy... and The Blend
Jasmine Records - JASBOX 32-4 Price £17:99/ $29:68

4 CD set with 124 tracks. Bing is featured with the Andrews girls on Disc 3 as follows -

20. Don't Fence Me In 21. I Can Dream, Can't I? 22. The Tennessee Waltz 23. The Wedding Samba 24. Lock Stock and Barrel 25. The Freedom Train 27. High on the List 28. Life Is So Peculiar

Track 20 is taken from a KMH show of 1945, whilst 21–24 are from Chesterfield Radio shows, with the remaining items from the issued records. Track 26 features a three and a half minute interview with the sisters and Vic Schoen (their principal arranger / conductor) on the topic of Bing.

I mentioned this in issue #167, and have now heard it. Jasmine have consistently shown wide knowledge of their chosen subject when selecting their material, drawing not only from official issues but imaginatively from other, mainly radio, sources. Here they keep up that record. I have tended to think a little dismissively of the sisters in the past, regarding them as having but one gimmick and being brassy to boot, but here, partly because of the excellent selection, I found a wider range than I had given them credit for. They are joined by a number of luminaries of the time including Burl Ives, Dick Haymes and Ernest Tubb, as well as a number of arrangers / orchestra leaders. There is a mix of radio and record material, the former adding newness and variety. I enjoyed the set far more than I thought likely and the comments about Bing in the interview are interesting.

Rosemary Clooney - The CBS Radio Recordings 1955-61 Mosaic Records #258
Limited Edition (5000) 5CD box set. Price $85

I think I'm justified in mentioning this set because of the origin of the content. 120 tracks culled from three radio show series, in two of which Rosemary shared honours with Bing - the "The Ford Road Show" and "The Crosby - Clooney Show" as well as Rosemary's own "Rosemary Clooney Show". On over 100 of the songs Rosemary is accompanied by Buddy Cole and his Trio. No Bing, but the set fits very nicely with the 7CD set of Bing's from the Mosaic issue of 2009. Together with the two CD set "Bing and Rosie - The Crosby Clooney Radio Sessions" the sets provide a not quite complete compilation from the "library" of songs used by Bing and Rosemary in the long sequence of radio shows which they shared. Rosemary breezed through these recordings in the same relaxed way that Bing did and both benefit from the relatively happy approach to music that they clearly enjoyed with accompanists well attuned to them.

VINYL LP

Merry Christmas (Remastered Vinyl LP) Geffen Records Price around £11/ $18-20

1. Silent Night (1942 Version) 2. Adeste Fideles (O Come All Ye Faithful) 3. White Christmas 4. God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen 5. Faith of Our Fathers 6. I'll Be Home for Christmas 7. Jingle Bells 8. Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town 9. Silver Bells (with Carol Richards) 10. It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas 11. Christmas in Killarney 12. Mele Kalikimaka

(Tracks 7, 8 and 12 with the Andrews Sisters.)

In most key respects this is a straightforward reissue of one of the most popular, best-selling and most reissued of all Bing's LPs, though some issues suffered from a vile form of electronic stereo processing. The cover is nearly identical to the original issue and it has appeared as a CD. Most collectors will have it in some form. The key difference is in the re-mastering and the issue on heavyweight vinyl. "High End" hi-fi enthusiasts will tell you that with the right equipment they get better quality sound than is possible from CD. Technically they are correct, because there are two limitations to the CD, imposed by the sampling rate and the available frequency range. The problem is that to appreciate the difference you need some fairly pricey playing equipment. Nonetheless there is a

small but growing niche market for the old fashioned vinyl disc, especially those produced from virgin vinyl in heavy weights – usually 180 grams. Several Frank Sinatra LPs have been issued in this form and were well received. Possibly the surprising aspect of this particular issue is in the material itself, which is hardly the highest of Hi-fi, originating, as some of it does, from 1940s originals. However I have heard, at second hand, some very favourable comment. There is no artificial stereo – just the original in the purest form that you are likely to get, so if you happen to have the right quality playing equipment, and enjoy a pair of golden ears this could be for you. Geffen Records are part of UMG, so this is clearly an "official" release

DVD and BLU-RAY

White Christmas Diamond Anniversary Edition - Blu-ray – Paramount. Price around £16/$23

What I can only call a monster pack, consisting of two DVDs, a Blu-ray disc, and a CD.
The Blu-ray includes 5.1 sound, several language options, and a number of extras including five Christmas television show appearances by Bing and Danny Kaye, the "virtual duet" with Michael Bublé and some other material that has been available previously including a commentary by Rosemary Clooney. The second DVD features a number of the special items on the Blu-ray disc but in standard definition, whilst the CD includes the following tracks (all Bing unless stated) some of which have not previously been officially released.

1. Winter Wonderland – (Rosemary Clooney) 2. Deck the Halls/Away in a Manger/O, Little Town of Bethlehem/The First Noel 3. Waltz around the Christmas Tree – (Danny Kaye) 4. Marshmallow World (with Ella Fitzgerald) 5. The Christmas Song – (R.C.) 6. Just What I Wanted for Christmas 7. Santa Claus Is Coming to Town (R.C.) 8. Jingle Bells – (D.K. & Peggy Lee) 9. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer (with Judy Garland) 10. Home for the Holidays (R.C.) 11. Some Children See Him (D.K.) 12. The Night Before Christmas

I have not yet personally sampled the set but have had one early favourable report. I am a little puzzled by the packaging of both Blu-ray and DVD versions together, though this is not uncommon.

Holiday Inn - Blu-ray - Universal Studios - Price around £11:50/ $18

In 2008 we had a miraculous successful coloured version of 'Holiday Inn'. It far outshone any attempt that I had previously seen at "colorization" and was wholly convincing. Now we have it in even more detail on Blu-ray packaged with the featurette "A Couple of Song and Dance Men", a documentary about the colouring process, and an audio commentary from Ken Barnes which were all included in the 2008 DVD issue.

The Grace Kelly Collection - DVD - Warner Brothers - Price around £15/$20
Region 1

A seven DVD set of Grace Kelly's films – and of course we get "High Society" along with "The Country Girl" with Bing. Non Bing material is "Mogambo", "The Bridges at Toko-Ri", "To Catch a Thief", "Dial M for Murder", and a documentary about Grace Kelly, "Princess Grace De Monaco: A Moment in Time".

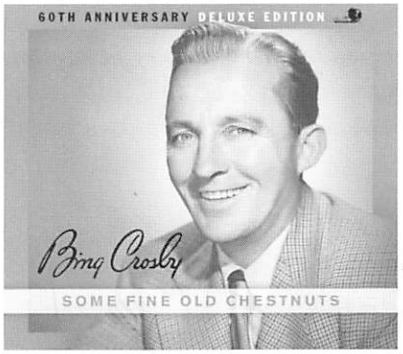
FORTHCOMING CDS

I now come to the flood that I referred to earlier. At the time of writing I have of course not sampled any of the content. Whilst I welcome it all with enthusiasm, I would have wished that the issues were more spaced out and I have received adverse comments about the long drought followed by such an overwhelming bundle. It comes from Bing Crosby Enterprises with Universal Music Enterprises, and has been announced with some fanfare as "A Colossal Crosby Celebration". At the time of writing some details are lacking and there are as yet no listings from sources outside the US. There are no discernible features that account for the differential pricing between the first two CDs and the next two in the following summaries.

Some Fine Old Chestnuts (60th Anniversary Deluxe Edition) [CD] Price around $11

Issue date November 25th.
1. Do You Ever Think of Me? 2. I Never Knew (That Roses Grew) 3. Somebody Loves Me 4. After You've Gone 5. Sleepy Time Gal 6. Dinah 7. I Never Knew (I Could Love Anybody) 8. I Can't Give You Anything But Love 9. In a Little Spanish Town 10. Honeysuckle Rose 11. Ol' Man River 12. Swanee 13. Painting the Clouds with Sunshine - * 14. Bright Eyes - * 15. Avalon Town - * 16. Sometimes I'm Happy (with Helen O'Connell) - * 17. I Can't Believe That You're in Love With Me - * 18. Hallelujah - * 19. I Can't Give You Anything But Love (Rehearsals) - * * 20. I Can't Give You Anything But Love - * 21. I Never Knew (I Could Love Anybody) (take 2) - * 22. I Never Knew (That Roses Grew) - * * 23. After You've Gone (take 2) - * *

* = never previously issued and ** = never previously issued and never broadcast.



The first part of the CD is as issued on the original LP. It has previously been available on CD (together with the tracks from "New Tricks"). The remainder seems to me to be likely taken from radio, particularly the General Electric shows. It has long been known that many of the songs included in those shows were recorded under studio conditions and in consequence are in high quality audio without any intrusive audience noises. I suspect it is possible that the tracks labelled as never before broadcast could be rehearsals or items recorded for broadcast but discarded for some reason.

Songs I Wish I Had Sung the First Time Around (Deluxe Edition) [CD] Price around $11

Issue date November 25th.

1. April Showers 2. When My Baby Smiles at Me 3. My Blue Heaven 4. A Little Kiss Each Morning 5. Prisoner of Love 6. Ain't Misbehavin' 7. Paper Doll 8. This Love of Mine 9. Thanks for the Memory 10. Blues in the Night 11. Mona Lisa 12. Memories Are Made of This 13. Thank Heaven for Little Girls - * 14. You'll Never Know - * 15. At Sundown - * 16. Cocktails for Two 17. Way Down Yonder in New Orleans - * 18. Mandy Make Up Your Mind - * 19. 'Deed I Do - * 20. Lady of Spain - * 21. Heart of My Heart (with The Four Aces) - * 22. A Kiss to Build a Dream On - *

* = never previously issued.

Again the first part is as issued on the original LP, long unavailable and only issued on CD in Japan before appearing on the recent Sepia release. The comments for "Some Fine Old Chestnuts" otherwise also apply. I wonder if Bing would approve of the sentiment contained in the title applied to the additional songs.

American Masters: Bing Crosby Rediscovered - The Soundtrack [CD] Price around $16

Issue date November 25th.

1. I've Got A Pocketful of Dreams (rehearsal) 2. Star Dust 3. A Fine Romance (with Dixie Lee) 4. Medley: Mississippi Mud / I Left My Sugar Standing in the Rain (with Harry Barris and Al Rinker) 5. Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams (outtake) 6. San Fernando Valley 7. You're Just in Love (with Judy Garland) 8. Moonlight Becomes You 9. Sweet Leilani 10. Swinging on a Star 11. Put it There, Pal (with Bob Hope) 12. White Christmas 13. It's Been a Long, Long Time (featuring Les Paul) 14. Temptation 15. Just One More Chance 16. The Second Time Around 17. The Oldest Established (with Dean Martin and Frank Sinatra) 18. Now You Has Jazz (with Louis Armstrong) 19. Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho 20. Medley: I'm Glad I'm Not Young Anymore / I Wish I Were in Love Again (with Maurice Chevalier) 21. Where the Blue of the Night 22. I Surrender Dear.

This disc seems from the evidence of the titles to be a collection of songs spread through Bing's career and nearly all previously issued on numerous LPs and CDs. The possible exception is the first title which might possibly be the version on DLA1293-A issued on a couple of LPs with limited circulation, though this is merely a guess. From the title and the design of the cover it appears to be the song content of the similarly named DVD (see below).

Bing Sings the Irving Berlin Songbook [CD] Price around $16

Issue date November 25th.

1. Alexander's Ragtime Band (with Connee Boswell) 2. Call Me up Some Rainy Afternoon 3. When the Midnight Choo-Choo Leaves for Alabam' 4. When I Lost You 5. Tell Me Little Gypsy 6. All by Myself 7. Always (with Eugenie Baird) 8. Let's Start the New Year Right 9. Abraham 10. Kate (Have I Come Too Early, Too Late?) 11. Blue Skies (featuring Les Paul) 12. I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm 13. I Got the Sun in the Morning 14. Easter Parade (with Trudy Erwin) 15. Some Sunny Day 16. Call of the South (with Gary Crosby) 17. Play a Simple Melody (with Dick Powell) 18. There's No Business Like Show Business (with the Andrews Sisters and Dick Haymes) 19. Puttin' on the Ritz 20. A Man Chases a Girl (Until She Catches Him) 21. The Song Is Ended (But the Melody Lingers On) 22. White Christmas (with Michael Bublé).

From the evidence of the titles this appears to be a mix of issued records and tracks of radio origin, but on the information available it is impossible to be certain. Some tracks could originate in the "Longines" set from which all too few titles exist on CD. The last track is the relatively recent "virtual duet" with Michael Buble. The date range would seem to extend up to the late 1960s so some items should be in stereo

Rosemary Clooney - Irving Berlin's White Christmas (Expanded Edition) Real Gone Music Price £12/ $13

Issue date November 4th.

1. White Christmas 2. Mandy 3. Snow 4. Gee, I Wish I Was Back in the Army 5. Love, You Didn't Do Right by Me 6. Sisters (with Betty Clooney) 7. The Best Things Happen While You're Dancing 8. Count Your Blessings Instead of Sheep 9. Happy Christmas, Little Friend 10. Home for the Holidays 11. Jingle Bells 12. Santa Claus Is Coming to Town 13. The Christmas Song 14. I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm 15. Silver Bells (with Bing Crosby)

Note - all tracks are of Rosemary. *Bing appearing where noted.*

The well-known "White Christmas "soundtrack" album was not in fact of the soundtrack at all. It was recorded by Bing and Danny Kaye with Peggy Lee standing in for Rosemary Clooney (and Trudy Stevens singing for Vera-Ellen as she had on the film soundtrack). This arose because Bing (and Danny) were contracted to Decca and Rosemary to Columbia, the two record companies failing to agree on a joint approach. Columbia therefore issued an LP with Rosemary singing her own songs and a few others from the film. This is effectively a CD re-issue of that LP from which the first eight songs originate. The remainder are of Rosemary's songs from Crosby's radio shows, "Silver Bells" being new to CD. A combination of the two albums (Bing's and Rosemary's) gives a slightly more accurate flavour of the soundtrack itself! However the effort was made a while back to combine all the essential elements on a CD titled "The Ultimate White Christmas" from Ideal Music, which is currently available as a download.

FORTHCOMING DVDs and BLU-RAY

The next item is also part of the "A Colossal Crosby Celebration" announcement. The "Television Specials" Volumes 1 and 2 and "The Legendary Bing Crosby" have also been announced for reissue in this large bundle.

American Masters: Bing Crosby Rediscovered

Issue date November 11th, 2014 (as a bonus with the Collection detailed below. Official release December 2nd, 2014)

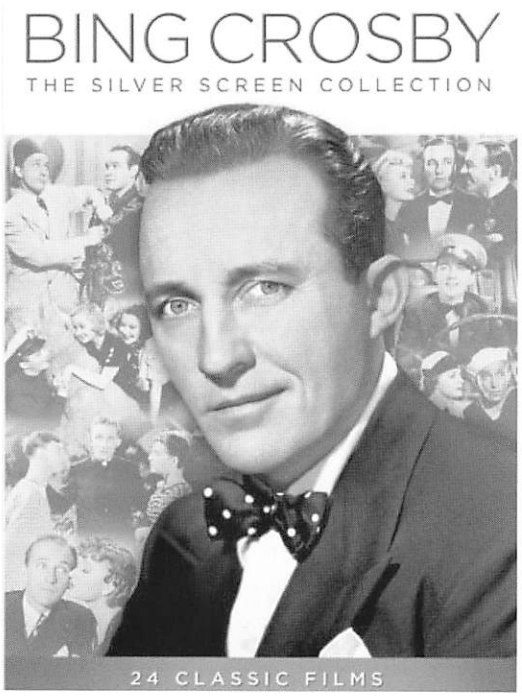
Stated to be "A new feature-length PBS documentary on the life and career of Bing Crosby with new interviews, never-before-seen footage and photos by Emmy-winning director Robert Trachtenberg. Plus featurette, original theatrical trailers and more!" Further details are given earlier in the magazine.

See also similarly named CD above

Bing Crosby: The Silver Screen Collection **Universal Studios Home Entertainment**

List Price: $199.98 but seen at pre-order offers down to around $92.

Issue date November 11th, 2014.



Movie titles are : College Humor (1933) / We're Not Dressing (1934) / Here Is My Heart (1934) / Mississippi (1935) / Rhythm on the Range (1936) / Waikiki Wedding (1937) / Double or Nothing (1937) / Sing You Sinners (1938) / East Side of Heaven (1939) / Road to Singapore (1940) / If I Had My Way (1940) / Rhythm on the River (1940) / Road to Zanzibar (1941) / Birth of the Blues (1941) / Holiday Inn (1942) / Road to Morocco (1942) / Going My Way (1944) / Here Come the Waves (1944) / Road to Utopia (1946) / Blue Skies (1946) / Welcome Stranger (1947) / Variety Girl (1947) / The Emperor Waltz (1948) / A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court (1949) / DVD Collection Bonus Features:

A gigantic issue - 24 movies on 13 discs. I have been unable to identify any film within the collection that has not been available on DVD, though so far as I can tell a couple might only have been generally available in DVD-R (or "burn on demand") format. I would think that enthusiasts would have many of the titles in some form but some will undoubtedly welcome the possibility of filling gaps at the expense of some duplication, or the convenience of having so many in one package, but I do wonder at the overall rationale for the issue.

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